University of Alberta

The Human Capital Theory: Implications for Education and Training for Aboriginal Employment

by

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Abstract

Social theories are shaped by cultural, political, social, or gendered contexts, and can simultaneously reflect or reject the lives, worldviews, or spiritualities of diverse populations. This research discusses the historical applications of the Human Capital Theory with various views of the function of education and how it benefits individuals and societies. Though the Human Capital Theory optimistically promotes education and training as a powerful individual and social lever that also benefits a national economy, its implementation in diverse Aboriginal environments results in variable outcomes for learners.

Education and training policy for Aboriginal employment must be based on revised theories that account for community needs so that Aboriginal people will have equal access to education and training as well as the assurance of equal outcomes. Steps toward this goal rest with leadership efforts to articulate and coordinate local control over educational institutions and to create educational programs that model emancipatory practices. The application of relevant social theory in educational policy can ensure the rights of Aboriginal populations in politically and economically vibrant communities.

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Chapter I
Introduction to Research

Theories of Social Behaviour

Social behaviour theory provides a means of looking at what humans do with each other, to themselves, or to the "Other". It offers a framework in which to examine how events unfold among humans. Social theory facilitates an examination of the ordinary and sometimes hidden aspects of life, perhaps hidden because powerful people want them hidden, or perhaps hidden because of their threatening nature, or perhaps hidden simply because it takes time to observe and reflect on the ordinary (Lemert, 1999).

However, just as social theories reflect human life, they also influence human life. Social theory can have an impact on how humans live by defining what is "normal", what is "truth", and sometimes even what is "right". Power struggles can arise when some people try to define what is normal, truthful, or right for others. While it is argued, particularly in a political context, that some theories are more appropriate than others in addressing social maladies, perhaps it is not only a matter of appropriate versus less appropriate social behaviour theories, but their application in dynamic contexts, among multi-cultural populations, and in politically and economically vibrant communities.

Sojourner Truth called out at the Women's Convention in 1851, "Ain't I a Woman?", insinuating that her life experiences as a woman were not represented at the convention (in Bristow, 1995). Audre Lorde wrote her essay *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*, a critique on previous academic theory that also did not speak to her life experiences, and suggested a need for new tools to

think about the world (Lemert, 1999). These women remind us that social theories give explanations to particular aspects of *one's* world, rather than *the* world, suggesting that particular perspectives presented in social theory are shaped by cultural, political, social, gendered or other contexts, and that what may be applicable to one context may not speak to the lives, worldviews, or spiritualities of others. Truth and Lorde point out there is profound danger in applying a particular social theory to another culture or personality and that silencing particular experiences impacts the sanctity of human rights, dignity, and survival. It becomes imperative, therefore, to understand not only the theories of social behaviour but their application in diverse contexts and the possible competing or complementary outcomes of these applications.

Background of Theories of Social Behaviour Shaping Policy for Education and Training

Freire (1972) reminds us that a historic understanding of education produces the most powerful consciousness by suggesting that "the learner's capacity for critical knowing--well beyond mere opinion--is established in the process of unveiling their relationships with the historical-cultural world in and with which they exist" (35). Therefore, understanding how historical social theory affected Aboriginal people in Canada and the resulting educational programs for them is critical to understanding the current context of Aboriginal education and training.

The historical process of education and training in Canada has been closely linked to the historical development of social theories, which in turn have profound outcomes on students and their communities. Specifically, choices and policies of the past have shaped Aboriginal education and training of today and, though

potentially contentious, this understanding is imperative to developing a critical consciousness of barriers to achievement and options for success.

In Canada, the nineteenth century tradition of political liberalism featured adjunct notions of equality, liberty, and justice and a social tradition of education based on ideas of growth through capitalist production, scientific discovery, and social rationalization. It is at this time when there was an influx of Anglo settlers throughout Canada who created public, also known as "common schools", which mimicked a moral and intellectual model including Christian doctrine for good citizenship (Gresko, 1979; Hampton, 1995; Wilson, 1986; Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

It was this social ideology that guided the Canadian government and "missionary" administration as they assumed leadership of the education of Aboriginal peoples in the early 1800s. Multiple nations had their own forms of education based on connections to cultural traditions, values, and belief systems that shaped and were shaped by their environments. However, supported by powerful social and political ideology, non-Aboriginal educational programmers and policy leaders enforced a rapid transformation from traditional forms of education to colonial forms of education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The purpose of the colonial education was to pry Aboriginal people from their traditional way of life and assimilate them into a more "civilized" existence so that they could participate, at a level "proper to their station in life", in a white world. Traditional values and worldviews, including language were undermined, with lasting social and cultural effects (Graveline, 1998; Wilson, 1986). An examination of this history helps us to

understand the application of particular social theory among multi-cultural populations and in politically and economically vibrant communities.

To create a historical understanding of education and training in Canada, this research focuses on Human Capital Theory, its implementation in diverse cultural environments, as well as its outcomes on various stakeholders of the education practice.

Human Capital Theory was developed and popularized by Adam Smith whose image of the "invisible hand" is a metaphor for the force that rationally guides the marketplace and leads self-interested individuals to promote public welfare. Smith suggests that the marketplace can reward those who succeed in educational pursuits and that education and training allows for greater productivity and greater income. Therefore, future incomes and contributions to societal economic growth vary according to the amount of education investment, so that individuals can invest in themselves through education and for long-term personal profit. Further, Human Capital Theory supports investment in the skills of the population as a local and national goal to ensure competitiveness in a global economy (Woodhall, 1987).

This theory has become popularized in education and training policy because of increasing government–business partnerships where the interests of business executives, whose economic motives are stated, and government policy builders, who supposedly represent non-business and even anti-business, converge as approximately equal partners.

Government-business partnerships have drawn on Human Capital Theory to shape political goals and achievements in this province. The political environment in

Alberta, led since 1993 by the conservative government of Premier Ralph Klein, endorses a so-called "Alberta Advantage" by encouraging Alberta's abundant wealth through a favourable business environment by providing reduced business taxes, sympathetic regulations, and minimal government intervention. Business incentives and rich oil reserves contribute to a booming economy where in certain sectors there are more jobs than workers. This government is currently addressing the labour shortage by developing policy initiatives to build employability skills for all citizens. In short, the goal to educate or train workers to be ready, willing, and able to perform in the economy is intended to allow people to find work, be more productive in that work, earn a reasonable living, and, of course, help sustain the Alberta Advantage (Brunnen, 2004; Government of Alberta, Strategic Business Plan, n.d; Government of Alberta, Alberta's Economic Results, n.d.).

However, this conservative orientation based on the Human Capital Theory views the economic and educational environment as being apolitical in orientation and individualistic in nature. It does not account for a social reality in which gender, class, ethnicity, age, or other classifications affect one's life chances, particularly in regards to education, training and work environments. Further, it assumes that individuals are motivated solely by economic self-interest. When this theory is applied to contexts that do not endorse broader values such as those of some Aboriginal communities, there may be a clash of worldviews that may inhibit the hope of economic or social "advantage".

Policy based on such views may be short-sighted in addressing social enrichment, not to mention sustaining the Alberta Advantage. For example, the

Alberta focus on short-term training for the trades may not be wise in a burgeoning economy because education skills and training initiatives may not be coordinated with current and future economic trends that are increasingly complex, globalized and competitive, and will influence new modes of employment. Policy leaders in the current world economy value information and knowledge, especially scientific and technical knowledge, which is replacing manual work and will be the key determinants for employment, social, and cultural chances (Heidemann, 2000). This growing trend creates the potential for a split between an "old" and "new" economy that will exist concurrently but where there may be potential for a split between "old" and "new" workers who have different skills, different access to training and education, and different employment goals. This trend may promote a future Alberta that has not kept pace with economic trends and may create a disservice to people who are not trained appropriately for work in a changing world economy.

Purpose of the Research

This research will focus on how popular social theories influence educational and training policy formation and its implementation and outcomes. Since the Human Capital Theory continues to inform education and training, it must be understood in terms of its historical context in order to address future goals. This research will build understanding not only of this influential theory but also its application in diverse contexts and possible competing or complementary outcomes of its application. While the Human Capital Theory assumes that private and public partnerships will ensure future economic prosperity and that such outcomes are mutually desirable and jointly achievable for diverse stakeholders, this research

proposes that the stronger influence of business in education and training policy formation and implementation programs potentially reinforces inequities and therefore may not be aptly applied to diverse contexts.

While this research focuses on educational and training policy for Aboriginal people in Alberta, there are broader implications for applying social theory to diverse contexts and how to retain local control and worldviews. Specifically, the Human Capital Theory offers potential to shape policy in Alberta, throughout Canada, and around the world, and this serves to illustrate the larger applicability of this research and analysis. Further, though it refers to Aboriginal groups in the Edmonton Region, it may also address broader questions for Aboriginal people in Canada, and perhaps Indigenous populations internationally. It may address questions of identity such as how to maintain Aboriginal traditions while also participating as equal citizens. This research may also address the sometimes competing and other times complementary goals of political leadership and policy making as a bicultural and multicultural enterprise.

Overview of the Research

This research begins with an orientation to traditional forms of First Nations' education, and then traces the education of Aboriginals after the influx of European governments and administrators. It outlines the development of education *for* Indians to education *by* Indians with the document *Indian Control of Indian Education* in 1972 (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1987; Kirkness, 1999). The momentum for Aboriginals to develop methods and structures of education and training has continued, albeit with tensions, as Aboriginals attempt to fit this practice into

mainstream institutions. This research examines a pervasive theory that shapes current education and training with an introduction and overview of the origins of the Human Capital Theory, its early development, and chronological modifications. It summarizes some of the theory's assumptions, and analyzes it to draw out unforeseen policy implications.

A case study of a Government of Alberta program for education and training for Aboriginal populations is then analyzed to evaluate its potential to equip Aboriginal people with the skills to participate equally in the Alberta economy. It examines impeding barriers for Aboriginal people, barriers within the Business environment, and barriers of policy environments and processes to seek clarification on evidence that suggests that, because of these barriers, the assumed human capital link between education and training, on one hand, and personal empowerment, on the other, is not automatic. The research concludes with suggestions on how policy leaders may transform applications of the Human Capital Theory, foster self-determination for local control of education and training policy, and concomitantly promote more socially responsible alternatives.

Research Questions

Issues that guide this research include the major influences on education and training policy for Aboriginal peoples. Specific questions include: How does social theory impact educational policy and how it is implemented? What are the impacts of this policy focus for First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or Aboriginal communities? Does the policy goal of creating a skilled labour force that suits the labour market translate into

socio-economic improvement for Aboriginal people in Alberta? What are responsible alternatives for education and training policy as it affects Aboriginal people?

Research Methodology and Scope

This research will use a combination of approaches to study Aboriginal education and training. It will use an ethno-historic approach to the study of traditional Aboriginal education and the native response to colonial education. It will also use a critical policy approach to questioning educational and training policy for Aboriginal youth and adults that will focus on key features of the policy context within the Government of Alberta through the Ministry of Human Resources and Employment in 2004-2006.

The data for this research includes review of program guidelines and participation and observations as an intern Project Coordinator for the Aboriginal Services Framework with Community and Business Services, a branch of Alberta Human Resources and Employment that creates and implements contracts for training and employment programs for Aboriginal people.

Role of Researcher

My role as an intern Project Coordinator was to assist the research, development, and implementation of various employment contracts specific to First Nations on-reserve, regional councils, and off-reserve/settlement Aboriginals in the Edmonton Region in 2004-2005. This role required understanding two geographically close, but often ideologically and pragmatically different, worldviews that sometimes caused tension over meanings, intentions, and interpretations. Building the trust necessary to work with Aboriginal people required time to network,

listen, and learn--a necessary requirement to understand the complex issues of demographics, employment issues, and training needs for clients. Yet this style of interaction is not well-understood or openly-accepted in a bureaucratic world of policy compliance, contract law, and Government of Alberta protocol.

Nevertheless, within this role, key stakeholders and participants along the way--students of employment training programs, program coordinators, and community advocates, as well as co-workers, and supervisors--offered insight on policy processes and shared insight and wisdom. Program documents and policy guidelines added detail to observations and inquiries as did interviews with students and instructors of the education and training programs for comparison of their comments with intended policy goals and objectives.

Chapter II, *Introduction to Aboriginal Education and Training,* provides a brief history of Aboriginal education. It describes traditional forms of education based on cultural traditions, values, and beliefs then it traces the rapid transformation from traditional forms of education to colonial forms. The chapter concludes with an example of a collective resistance from Aboriginal parents, teachers, and students.

Chapter II
Introduction to Aboriginal Education and Training

A Brief History of Aboriginal Education and Training

It is important to review the history of Aboriginal education in Canada and the changes to it with political power shifts. The historical struggles in education give insight to the present educational context. Since the arrival of Europeans in Canada, Aboriginal spiritual and social connections with the environment that influenced their political and economic structures have been ignored, disrespected, and even punished by policy aimed at assimilation. One of the most pervasive tactics was colonial control of First Nations' education where important aspects of identity such as native languages were prohibited (Chamberlain, 2000; Cottingham, 1991).

Aboriginal people, particularly the Elders, recognize a sense of identity is intrinsic to autonomy because it wards against the most damaging effects of colonization-internalized oppression, defined by Alfred (1999) as a gradual process of assuming the perceptions, values, and goals of the oppressors which leads to despair and self-hatred. Language is seen as intrinsic to culture because it reflects the imaginative and material values of society (Chamberlain, 2000).

The assimilation of education systems occurs with a profound loss, and fortunately many Aboriginal people across Canada are realizing concepts of local control of education that meets the social, economic, and political needs of students more effectively. All those committed to social justice should be motivated to examine and deconstruct historic personal and linguistic degradation and support alternatives that contribute to Aboriginal community and broader goals of education and training.

This section addresses concepts of Aboriginal education before colonial contact as expressed through Aboriginal pedagogy, defined as the art of teaching with reference to methods and principles that inform education techniques. The various forms of traditional Aboriginal education can be characterized as oral histories, story telling, ceremonies, and formal instruction that promote balance. These forms of education contrast with historic federal government imposition of pedagogies under the administrative paradigm of controlling and assimilating Indian peoples.

Institutions such as residential schools were created within a political context that has compounded grave consequences for Aboriginal people. The overt and covert racism in these institutions weakened the personal links to traditional culture. However, Aboriginal parents and children over many decades responded with practical and pedagogical resistance. Bands have increased local control of education to challenge European dominion and create space to rekindle traditional pedagogy. Recent inclusions of culturally-appropriate schooling can address historic degradation and transform it to personal and social empowerment (Fletcher, 2000).

Traditional Forms of Education

Without obscuring the distinctness of cultures, customs, and languages that rightfully characterize Aboriginal communities, it is possible to speak of generalized characteristics regarding Aboriginal knowledge and traditional forms of education. Though the conceptual notion of Aboriginal knowledge does not fit specific parameters or categories, a workable definition speaks to the location, politics, identity, and culture of people and lands. Traditional Aboriginal knowledge is associated with the long-term occupancy of a certain place, yet it also alludes to

political resistance of colonized knowledge (Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000). Aboriginal education encompasses similar characteristics in methods, process, content, and purpose that reflects and reinforces an Indigenous worldview with respect for the land. Children are encouraged to observe and imitate the actions of the community guardians. Mimetic learning through "oral-aural transmissions between human and non-human worlds" (Graveline, 1998, 120) teaches children valuable lessons about human and spiritual connections that can bring balance within themselves that can extend to the community. Practical skills and attitudes to function in everyday life include subsistence techniques, while community values such as tribal unity, mental, physical, and spiritual balance remain the focus of lessons (Barman, Hebert & McCaskill, 1987; Hampton, 1995; Kirkness, 1999; Park, 1997). Traditional Aboriginal education can be seen as a transmitter of consciousness, worldview, and culture. It provides:

> distinctive set of values, an identity, a feeling of rootedness, or belonging to a time and a place, and a felt sense of continuity with a tradition which transcends the experience of a single lifetime, a tradition that may be said to transcend over time (Ortiz in Graveline, 1998, 19).

Post-Contact Education and the Residential School

One of the most pervasive changes after Europeans settled in North-America was control over First Nations' education. Creation and enforcement of education policy marked political struggle between colonial powers and Aboriginal people where colonial governments eventually solidified control over Aboriginal education.

Significant programs and policies created the contemporary context of Aboriginal education. A series of enactments such as the 1842 Baggot Commission

and the Nicolas Flood Davin Report of 1879 supported changes from on-reserve schools to church missions (Park, 1997). The 1867 British North American Act established a constitutional basis for the Parliament of Canada to legislate over Aboriginals (Canadian Education Association, 1984, 11). Under the Indian Act of 1867, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) was empowered to operate schools and the Indian Agent gained authority to remove Indian children from their family to attend the schools (English-Currie, 1997).

The political context of federal control was founded on a particular social context where Aboriginal identity was undermined.[1] Ng (1993) points out that many tribal groups were described as a common race of 'Indians' who were characterized as "remarkably strange and savage...without faith, without law, without religion" (Thevet in Dickason, 1996, 9; see also Levaque, 1990; Wilson, 1986; Youngblood Henderson, 2000). School policy embedded a false and inferior profile of Aboriginal people by assuming that they constituted a "singular object to be acted upon" (Barman, 1996, 274).

Jay (in Graveline, 1998) suggests that, similarly, Europeans did not constitute a common culture so they had to invent one to justify their colonial project. They defined themselves as 'civilized' and placed themselves in a position of moral obligation to civilize the 'Indians' (Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

[1] Hampton (1995) suggests that often neglected in standard histories of Native education are examples of highly successful Native-oriented schools. These non-Native institutions featured goals, methods, and outcomes that can be characterized as schools for self-determination. Examples include schools and controlled by Chickawaw, Choctaw, and Cherokee nations as well as Russian mission schools for the Yup'ik people. These schools used Native languages, honoured Native cultures, and taught school-community relations with an emphasis on self-determination. Despite high success rates these schools were all closed by government.

Backed by prevalent political and social ideology, federal jurisdictions implemented the residential school model of education that dramatically impacted Aboriginal communities. The Canadian government delegated educational control to church authorities to aid the survival and civility of "Indians". Agricultural and industrial schools were viewed as a means to "compete in a white man's world" (Wilson, 1986, 72) where gender-appropriate trades were taught. The schools gained a reputation of enforcing an "education of oppression" (English-Currie, 1997, 53), for often the residential school was accused of propagating not only assimilation to Anglo-conformity, but as Barman (1996) suggests, inequality. She attributes this to less classroom instruction, poor quality of teaching, and lack of funding for the school operation.

Aboriginal students often experienced isolation, strict regimes of manual labour, and enforcement of religious doctrines all of which contributed to high mortality rates, sickness and physical and mental abuse (Kirkness, 1999). Equally oppressive was the fact that most students could not comfortably return home to traditional ways (Barman, 1996). The schools enforced an approach to learning, characterized by Graveline (1998) as objective, rational, linear, and formalized that undermined a student's identity, sense of history, and spiritual knowledge (Hampton & Wolfson, 1997; Longboat, 1987). Battiste (2000) argues that for Aboriginal students, the education system was based on cognitive imperialism that was used to disclaim other knowledge bases and values. As a result, Aboriginal students were led to believe that they were impotent because of their race. In summary, the goals and purposes of most residential schools undermined Indigenous nationhood politically,

economically, and spiritually—"politically, by seeking to undermine the authority of traditional governments; economically, by seeking to replace traditional ways of life with others less suitable; and spiritually, by seeking to replace Indian religions and values with Christian ones" (Longboat, 1987, 23).

Aboriginal Resistance to Assimilation

It has been argued that struggles between colonial and Aboriginal people produced a counterforce of resistance. Said (in Graveline, 1998) suggests:

> ...[n]ever was it the case that the imperial encounter pitted an active Western intruder against a supine or inert non-Western native; there was always some form of active resistance, and in the overwhelming majority of cases, the resistance finally won out (36).

Though parents voiced their concerns to their Indian Agents, it was the students who were primary actors of resistance, and some students emerged from the residential schools as advocates for their rights. Wilson (1986) suggests "[h]owever dismal the record of church-run Indian schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it remains a fact that most of today's Indian-rights leaders are products of those very schools" (64). Park (1997) echoes this by saying that residential schools housed "this century's leaders of Canadian and American Native political movements" (36) and advocated self-determination of education and the return to holistic principles that once characterized First Nations' education.

Federally-sanctioned residential schools aimed to reduce First Nations students into the lowest rungs of Canadian society, and they were instrumental in suppressing language and other traditions, but they ignited a political movement that resisted colonial control. Formalized resistance movements instigated critical reflection on the socio-political and spiritual loss of Aboriginal tradition. In the

majority of cases, the resistance has been successful (Graveline, 1998). One indicator is that many First Nations' languages remain "impervious to the enticements of European ways" (Chamberlain, 2000, 131) and remain untranslatable. As distinct languages continue, so too do the survival and dignity of human differences. In summary, the students, parents, and communities of Aboriginals rejected European educational models that debased Aboriginal integrity. Many Aboriginals re-established cultural systems that promoted and reinforced their community values in a movement to recover traditional worldviews.

Indian Control of Indian Education

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood, a national Indian rights organization now known as the Assembly of First Nations, created a national policy that called for the restoration of Aboriginal rights. The policy paper, Indian Control of Indian Education (ICIE), served as a turning point for educational improvements. It served as a critique of federal control, in part because it was spearheaded by the controversial 1969 White Paper in Indian Policy based on "assimilation through Indian equality within a dominant society" (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1987, 2). The document presented two central principles of parental responsibility and local control because of the efforts of First Nations' parents to "reverse the continued academic failure and alienation their children experienced in federal and provincial schools" (Fletcher, 2000, 348) and clearly articulated the need for educational materials that "more accurately represent First Nations' peoples, their culture and their contributions to Canadian history" (348). It recognized parents' demands for decision-making rights over their children's education and for an existence

independent from federal bureaucracy (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1987; Kirkness, 1999).

The ICIE defined aspects of local control within four separate categories of political, administrative, financial, and curricular control. Political control was achieved when bands were party to all "negotiations and decisions concerning Indian children, participating fully with the provincial/territorial jurisdictions and the federal government" (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1987, 9). There were specific problems regarding the transfer of political control, the most serious of which arise from a lack of legislation to provide a legal basis for the transfer. The Indian Act "authorizes the Minister to enter into agreements with public or separate school boards, provincial/territorial governments, religious or charitable organizations, but not with Indian Bands" (Kirkness, 1999, 230). Political control became a long and arduous process involving parents, educators, legal experts, and politicians. The sacrifices First Nations' communities made in their attempts to understand the courts often outweighed the gains and seemed risky. In the court system, First Nations' people faced the burden of translating their own language and systems of knowledge to learning the language and culture of Canadian courts. There remain few precedent-setting claims for the courts to look back on, and plodding through the technicalities over rights, title claims that influence constitutionally-protected rights, interpretations of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and treaty agreements is very time-consuming and costly (Fleras, 1996; Monture-Angus, 1999). Further, many Aboriginal people resented the implications of 'asking for' and being 'granted' rights because it seemed to legitimize an unjust claim of colonial jurisdiction over Indian people. The inherent

right of self-government, including governance over education and training, is not seen as a negotiable issue.

If partial control is achieved, bands face new challenges of functioning as an integrated system. They run the risk of operating as mere extensions of bureaucratic systems that "may simply be a way for federal and provincial government to expunge themselves of responsibility in their area" (Cassidy & Kavanagh, 1998, 50). Critical observers accuse the Canadian governments of granting local control of poverty and oppression, or problems that were created by the oppressors in the first place (Monture-Angus, 1999).

Financial, administrative, and curricular control is underachieved with partial political control. Under current funding policy, DIAND provides funding to bands under strict guidelines which impede the possibility for innovation (Kirkness, 1999). Further, Kirkness (1999) is critical of communities that administer curricular control in isolation because it impedes sharing where other communities have to 'reinvent the wheel'. She says that many programs, methods, and materials that are developed are not willingly shared, and this results in duplication and tensions. There is much rhetoric about the need for astute changes to curriculum; however, there has been limited practical implementation. In summary, the process of acquiring political control has met numerous challenges for Aboriginals; however, the limitations of partial control also contribute to frustration.

It appears that governments are theoretically, yet not practically, committed to the principles of local control. Then Minister of Indian Affairs, and later Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, responded, "I have given the National Indian

Brotherhood my assurance that I and my Department are fully committed to realizing the educational goals for the Indian people set forth in the Brotherhood's proposal" (Quoted by Cardinal in Kirkness, 1999, 18). In 1976, however, when the National Indian Brotherhood sought to legalize Indian control with revisions to the education section of the Indian Act, the departmental response was negative. DIAND was concerned that "[t]he amendments would vastly expand the present responsibilities of the Minister and the obligations of the federal government for funding while at the same time requiring the Minister to delegate 'in toto' that responsibility when band councils assumed control of education services (DIAND in Canadian Education Association, 1984, 12). In fact, the federal government was not committed to establishing jurisdiction, authority, funding, or other aspects of local control.

At the ten-year anniversary of Indian Control of Indian Education, the implementation of local control was still underachieved. The Assembly of First Nations passed a resolution voicing their concern and suggested that in light of DIAND's previous endorsement and acceptance of ICIE, they reissued the 1973 policy demands (Kirkness, 1999). While the implementation of Indian Control of Indian Education was limited by political reluctance, it was the first step of a continued struggle for First Nations to disengage from federal jurisdiction and to engage in local control.

Education and Fundamental Rights

Education and training for employment is an issue of human rights. In a growing momentum for Aboriginal people to raise a consciousness of their history and to direct changes for the future, they began to frame the discourse of local control

within a discourse of rights. As explained by Hampton and Wolfson (1997), education became increasingly described as a human right, as an Aboriginal right, and as a treaty right.

a. It is seen as a human right because in our complex world, post-secondary education is becoming so necessary that we must begin to consider it as a prerequisite to survival;
b. As an Aboriginal right because there is an additional obligation to provide education that will help preserve distinctive communities, languages, and cultures; and
c. As a treaty right because the treaties that the Crown entered into with the Aboriginal Peoples go beyond basic human and Aboriginal rights (Hampton & Wolfson, 1997, 91).

International human rights bodies also address Aboriginal educational rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the sanctity of human rights as imperatives of human dignity and survival where education is imperative. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

a. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
b. Education shall be directed to full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
c. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Beyond basic human rights and Aboriginal rights, there are treaty rights which are negotiations between the crown and individual Aboriginal communities. Treaty rights revolve around Aboriginal rights and are recognized by the Constitution. Much of the Canadian landscape was acquired through a treaty negotiation. In exchange for

land, the Canadian government negotiated provisions such as food, housing, and education and these treaty negotiations strongly affect the rights of many Aboriginal people today (Cassidy & Bish, 1989). The provision of education remains a treaty obligation of the Canadian crown. Hampton and Wolfson (1997) suggest that historically:

> [i]n exchange for vast tracts of land, the Crown committed Canada to equally vast educational obligations. The essence of these obligations was a commitment to equal educational attainment for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Education for self-determination was what our chiefs and elders had in mind when they negotiated our treaties…[and] it is only in partnership with Aboriginally controlled institutions that Canada can fulfill its treaty obligations of equal educational attainment (92).

In light of three hundred years of the Canadian Crown's failure to provide equal educational attainment Aboriginal people felt that the Crown was not fulfilling its treaty obligations.

The Edmonton-based Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) is active in research, advocacy, and education of Aboriginal women in Alberta for their promotion, improvement, and self-fulfillment. The institute has issued a number of research initiatives, toolkits, or publications such as "The Rights Path" that describes human rights laws that are supposed to be protected federally and provincially such as social, economic and cultural rights, employment rights, or housing rights (IAAW, 2001). This literature suggests that open or hidden discrimination is common for Aboriginal people, and that, due to nepotism and preferential treatment, Aboriginal women feel they have fewer employment opportunities and are treated differently at the worksite. However, "The Rights Path" lists and describes various employment rights under these headings:

(a) It's your right when job hunting to be treated with dignity and equality and without discrimination;
(b) It's your right when at work to be treated with dignity and equality and without discrimination;
(c) It is your right to speak out against discrimination;
(d) It is your right to work in a safe place;
(e) It's your right as a worker with a disability to have your needs met in the workplace;
(f) It's your right to get help when you are out of work (IAAW, 2001, 36).

Despite the legislation mandated to protect these human rights, such as the three human rights regimes in Canada--the 1977 Canadian Human Rights Act, the Provincial Human Rights Legislation, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms--there are still barriers specific to Aboriginal clients in realizing their human rights. In summary, whether defined as human rights, Aboriginal rights, or treaty rights it is recognized that equal access to education and training is an imperative for human dignity and survival.

This chapter presents an overview of traditional forms of education, colonial control over of education, as well as the beginnings of a movement where Aboriginals regain some control. Traditional Aboriginal education is described as a complex web of spiritual and social principles guiding instruction and learning. This form of education contrasts with federal government imposition of colonial policies under the administrative goals to control and assimilate Indian peoples. Institutions such as the residential school existed within a political context that has compounded grave consequences for Aboriginal people. Without obscuring the distinctness of individual Nations, and recognizing that this discussion does not represent the reality for all Aboriginal people, it is possible to describe covert and overt racism in federally-controlled intuitions that uprooted a traditional sense of identity and language.

A movement towards Aboriginal local control informs the ills of past policies and focuses on improvement for the future. Committed resistance by parents, students, and community leaders reframe and reconstruct visions of local control of education and training where identity and language, as well as other traditional aspects of culture, are rekindled and applied in a modern context. Aboriginal people have come a long way in the movement to restore traditional notions of education. However, in light of internal contractions of legal structures, it seems that Aboriginal people will have to journey further to find answers beyond colonial institutions.

Chapter III, *History of the Human Capital Theory*, introduces a particular social theory that has become pervasive in multicultural populations. This chapter traces the beginnings and chronological developments of the Human Capital Theory, it explains the theory's popularity among political leaders as well as numerous theoretical assumptions that limit the theory's potential as a powerful social lever.

Chapter III
History of the Human Capital Theory

Origins of the Human Capital Theory

Human capital refers to knowledge and skills that are acquired by individuals by means of education and training for their productive potential. Human capital is seen as an investment which raises future incomes and lifetime earnings. The amount of investment in human capital is believed to determine the productive capacities of individual and societies. The Human Capital Theory optimistically promotes education and training as a powerful individual and social lever that will also benefit a national economy. This optimism has promoted leaders to translate this theory to policy (Human Capital Policy) for education and training with consequent implications for learners (Baptiste, 2001; Woodhall, 1987).

This section presents an overview of the Human Capital Theory by tracing its origins, early development, and chronological turning points. Historical phases in its development relate to differing views of the function of education and how it benefits individuals and societies which, in turn, influences opinions on who should bear the costs for such education and training.

The concept of human capital originated with the Scottish philosopher, social theorist, and economist, Adam Smith who, in his 1776 publication Wealth of Nations, suggested that humans are a capital ingredient in economic growth (Baptiste, 2001, Little, 2003, Woodhall, 1987). Smith suggested that just as physical capital increased the production of an enterprise, education could increase the productivity of workers. Smith (quoted in Baptiste, 2001) states: "a man educated at the expense of much labor…may be compared to one…expensive machine….The work which he learns to

perform…over and above the wages of common labor will replace the whole expense of his education" (186). In other words, the cost of a machine can compare to the cost of education. Just as the long-term benefits of a machine outweigh the initial expense, the long-term benefits of education will outweigh its initial costs.

Smith's insights were largely ignored until revisited by Irvin Fisher (1906), and later solidified by the Chicago School at the University of Chicago established in 1892, representing one "camp" that suggested people become capital by investing in themselves and that this investment relates to future working productivity and earnings. This investment could broaden their options and life chances and was therefore a freedom-enhancing endeavour. This view tied earnings to educational expense as well as to productivity (Baptiste, 2001; Woodhall, 1987).

However, there was a diversity of perspectives due to theoretical, empirical, and methodological differences, and this led to the existence of at least two other "camps" that speculated on the relationship between humans, labour, capital, and earnings (Baptiste, 2001). The second camp represented by English philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and English economist Alfred Marshall (1842-1924) were offended by the notion of humans as capital. They were committed to a more moral and philosophical obligation to human dignity by making a firm distinction between the acquired capacities of humans, such as skills and knowledge, and human beings themselves. They suggested that peoples' economic activities should lead to wealth, but that human beings themselves were not marketable.

Another camp represented by German social theorist Karl Marx (1818-1883) may have explored the human capital theory but had different understanding of the

meaning of human capital. Like other human capitalists, Marx agreed that an individual might receive higher earnings because of greater productivity after an educational investment, but he added that the cost of education should also be considered. He suggested that workers sell labour power rather than themselves, and that the capacity to work is not a form a capital. He felt that only when the labour is used in the process of production is it a form of capital (Baptiste, 2001). Further, only under specific conditions can individuals sell their labour power. First, the labour power must be for sale as a commodity on the market and therefore foster an exchange between one who has money to buy the commodity and one who offers it for sale. Second, owners of the labour power would have to sell their commodity for a set period of time. If the time was not specified, it could be argued that one would be selling one's self and no longer be free. In order to avoid the binds of slavery one would be inclined to sell one's labour for a definite period of time to continue his or her rights of ownership over the labour–power or, in other words, his/herself. Finally, there are historic conditions that must be met in order for labour-power to become a commodity. Marx (in Lemert, 1999) suggests that:

> the historical conditions of [a commodity's] existence are by no means given with the mere circulation of money and commodities. It can spring into life, only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence meets in the market with the free labourer selling his labour-power. And this one historical condition comprises a world's history (63).

With its analytical focus on the process of production, this theory diverged from the developing theory of human capital. From its inception in the 1770s, there was a narrow view of humans as capital because of their labour power. However, other theoretical camps expanded this view through exploration of broader questions such

as life options and human dignity. Nevertheless, prior to the mid-1900s, as noted by Walsh (in Baptiste, 2001), discussions about humans as capital used very generalized terms, "references being made to all men [sic] as capital, and to all kinds of expenses in rearing and training as [investment]" (185). A more formal articulation of the Human Capital Theory began in the mid-1900s when theorists more clearly defined the terms and conditions of the theory.

A Human Capital Revolution - 1960-1970

In the early 1960s, with increased interest by noteworthy schools, there were significant developments in the Human Capital Theory to define and measure educational investment and its effectiveness in North America. At this time, Friedman (1962) confirmed the Chicago School's interest in the Human Capital Theory where Theodore Schultz, a 1979 Nobel Prize winner, articulated further theoretical developments. He suggested that the term *investment* included all actions aimed at improving ability and productivity that included: direct costs of education, health, and migration, earnings foregone by students attending school and workers attaining on-the-job training, and the sacrifice of leisure time to pursue education, among others. The differentiation of capital from other investments was that capital was an intentional acquisition of skills (Baptiste, 2001; Coleman, 1987). Schultz researched the inventory of human capital in the United States and the resulting economic growth, and his publication, Investment in Human Beings (1961), included an analysis of education expenditures as investment. In his presidential address to the American Economic Association, he delivered the inauguration of the "human investment revolution in economic thought" (in Baptiste, 2001, 187).

The Human Capital Theory became a revolutionary deviation from previous economic thinking. Until the Human Capital Theory emerged, Keynesian economics suggested that education was consumable and, if education could enhance an individual, then that individual should bear the costs. What English economist John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) previously termed "consumption" became known in human capital language as "capital investment" - an investment because earnings foregone by students while in education or training would be returned in the form of greater productivity, greater earnings, and reinvestment into the community. At this point, the vital link between education and economic growth emphasized the value of public investment in human capital because individuals could also contribute to his or her community and build competitive advantage over other communities and nations (Baptiste, 2001; Coleman, 1987; Diebolt, 2004; Little, 2003).

Gary Becker, 1992 Nobel Prize winner, in his publication Human Capital (1962), did more than point to analogies between education and investment in physical capital. He affirmed that it is possible to measure the profitability of human capital investment through a rate of return. He proposed a theory of human investment that calculated the relationship between levels of education, income, and economic growth. His theory was based on the study of income disparities between ethnic groups in the United States and suggested that these disparities are caused by differing human capital investment. He asserted that differing ethnic groups that he termed Japanese, Chinese, Jews, and Cubans, had smaller families than Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and blacks, and were able to spend more per child on education. He also suggested that Cubans valued economic mobility more than blacks and therefore

invested more in human capital. He observed different rates of return between families that invested more in human capital than those families that invested less, confirming that investment in education must be understood in terms of anticipated future income and consequent economic growth. His observations of the varied earnings between these ethnic groups endorsed his view that education investment is a direct means to socioeconomic mobility (in Baptiste, 2001). Human capital was seen as a source of economic growth that was not previously accounted for by increases in land, labour, and physical capital (Diebolt, 2004; Little, 2003; Woodhall, 1987).

Cost-benefit analysis was a technique traditionally used to express the costs and benefits of an investment of physical capital and usually expressed through a single figure, the rate of return. Schultz and Becker were first to apply it to the Human Capital Theory in order to measure the costs and benefits of human labour (Little, 2003). According to the cost-benefit analysis in Human Capital Theory, there are individual costs and benefits as well as social costs and benefits to education and training; individuals invest in human capital through educational fees or through earnings foregone while in school, and their benefit is greater employability and higher lifetime earnings expressed as a *private* rate of return on their educational investment (Woodhall, 1987).

On the other hand, society invests in human capital through public funds funneled to subsidize tuition, and the social benefits include an educated workforce that increases a society's economic productivity, expressed as a *social* rate of return on investment. The cost-benefit analysis may be further extended to compare the

economic profitability of different types or levels of education or training such as on-the-job training or classroom training (Woodhall, 1987). Cost-benefit analysis compares all related costs of education and training to the value added to individuals and to society after completion of this education and training.

Cost-benefit analysis made it possible to compare investments and decipher optimum investment strategies. For example, the work of Psacharopulos (1973, 1981) measured the private and social rates of return on investment in several countries. In his comparisons of earnings of workers in 44 countries from 1958-1978, he suggested four general patterns (in Woodhall, 1987):

(a) The returns to primary education (whether social or private) are the highest among all educational levels;
(b) Private returns are in excess of social returns, especially at the university level;
(c) All rates of return to investment in education are well above the 10% common yardstick of the opportunity cost of capital;
(d) The returns of education in less developed countries are higher relative to the corresponding returns in more advanced countries.

The studies of Psacharopoulos investigated the private and social rates of return for primary, secondary, and higher education in less developed, intermediate, and economically advanced countries and confirmed for him that expenditure on education was a profitable investment for the individual and for society as shown by earnings of workers. Psacharopoulos then took his comparison of various countries one step further in an attempt to answer the difficult question of whether investment in human or physical capital is more profitable. His studies suggest:

(a) The returns to both forms of capital are higher in developing countries, which reflects the differences in relative scarcities of capital in either form in developed and developing countries; and
(b) Human capital is a superior investment in developing countries but not in developed countries... (in Woodhall, 1987, 221).

Psacharopoulos tried to probe questions that were of critical concern for economists and policy planners. He questioned rates of return for single years in various countries and then addressed the question presented as investment in men *versus* investment in machines" (in Woodhall, 1987, 221). These became important questions during intensified technological changes that revolutionized patterns of work.

In summary, the research of Schultz, Becker, and Psacharopoulos in the mid 1900s in North America suggests a vital link between education and economic growth. Using different approaches, studies aligned with neo-classical theories of capital, that individual investment in education must be understood in terms of the additional income expected as a result. With the promise of increased incomes and the consequent greater circulation of wealth, human capital was seen as a predictable mechanism for economic growth.

A Turning Point for the Human Capital Theory - 1980

Events of the 1970s halted the unqualified support for the Human Capital Theory. Despite evidence for increased educational attainment, there were economic tensions and an explosion of income inequalities, particularly in developing countries (Baptiste, 2001; Heidemann, 2000; Vandenberghe, 1999). Modifications to the Human Capital Theory began to emerge in the 1980s, and support for the public investment approach began to waver. New lines of research surfaced with efforts to construct models that better represented links between education and growth. These alternative models of the Human Capital Theory became robust once again with dramatic shifts in the political and economic environments. Economic and political

goals of modernization, international competition, and economic growth favoured the economic possibilities of education, and the Human Capital Theory once again took center stage.

The screening hypothesis became a turning point for Human Capital theorists as it reexamined the role of education as a screen for those able to cope with rapid technological changes (Baptiste, 2001; Diebolt, 2004; Woodhall, 1987). Those supporting the screening hypothesis suggested that education becomes a valuable filter for individuals who are able to achieve necessary qualifications or credentials, not because of skills and knowledge, but because it shows that they have learned qualities that employers seek such as punctuality, submission to authority, or motivation. Marginson (in Baptiste, 2001) explains:

> The screening theorists see the education's fundamental role as that of a selection system for employers. The content of education has little relevance to worker performance or wage levels. Rather, educational credentials act as a surrogate for qualities that employers want, such as willingness and the capacity to learn (187).

This perspective suggests that the main function of education is to screen individuals who have certain abilities, aptitudes, and attitudes that are attractive to employers. Educational credits are not seen as increasing worker cognitive capacities but as enabling employers to identify people with innate ability or personal characteristics to make them productive (Baptiste, 2001; Woodhall, 1987).[2]

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[2]Critics of the screening hypothesis pose the question that if educational credentials enhance productivity, is it because education forms essential skills or, alternatively, is it a screen for those individuals who already possess a strong work ethic? Those who feel that education is more than a filter for individuals point out that employers **do** use educational qualifications in employee selection and employers continue to pay educated workers more than uneducated workers. Further, if education does not improve productivity, why is there not a cheaper means than education to screen workers? (Woodhall, 1987).

In the 1980s it was becoming clear that changes in technology were shaping the labour market with profound consequences for the types of knowledge and skills needed in employment. The ability of corporations to respond to the technological changes hinged on education and training. This presented a major turning point for the Human Capital Theorists. Wozniak (in Baptiste, 2001) suggested that, "By augmenting the ability to learn and the capacity to adjust to disequilibria, education helps workers meet the creativity and flexibility of advancing technology" (188). Government policy leaders started to listen to the endorsement of The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an influential organization of thirty member countries committed to what they term "democratic government and the market economy" (OECD, 1990). OECD stated similarly that the relationship between education and future income is mediated by available technology. The OECD spearheaded revisions to the function of education which aligned with screening hypothesis of the Human Capital Theory. Baptiste (2001) summarizes:

> The OECD contended that education and training perform important screening functions that are likely to positively affect worker productivity regardless of whether or not the training provides specific, job-related skills. The key, according to the OECD, appears to be the ability of workers to cope with technological changes and to turn them into advantages in the future.... The OECD believed that education, through its screening function, streamlines the available pool of flexible and adaptable workers and consequently enhances the efficiency of both the recruitment and production processes (188).

Therefore, education was seen as the screening device for workers who had learned to think systematically about techniques and use technology to increase productivity.

The screening hypothesis differed from the public investment approach to education as it questioned the real merits of educational content. If education simply

offered individuals certain aptitudes for work, then individuals should bear the costs, and their expense would easily be recovered once they were employed. In this way, an individualistic understanding of the benefits of education, for example through higher earnings, suggested individuals should bear their educational costs. Following this logic, it was seen that if individuals require assistance with their private investment, they would seek loans rather than rely on public funds (Baptiste, 2001). The OECD also suggests there is no obvious reason why the rest of the community should be expected to pay for costs of education if individuals benefit (Baptiste, 2001).

The production-functionalist became another Human Capital strain of analysis that was generally employed after the 1980s with increased focus on the economics of education. It concentrated on the distribution of resources within educational sectors to yield greatest economic benefit by identifying correlations between educational inputs such as teacher salaries, class size, capital expenditures, and outputs, which were typically standardized test scores, and compared these on a nationwide scale (Taylor, 2002; Vandenberghe, 1999). The production-function analysis was intended to provide insight on the most productive blend of inputs used for educational and training policy.

From the 1980s to present, the Human Capital Theory continues to play a significant role in shaping popular notions of the functions and goals of education and training. Human capitalists suggest that education can be a means to expand economic capacity of the individual and the nation. The main points of the

contemporary, post-1980 until present, version of the Human Capital Theory are summarized as follows:

(a) Human capital is investment in any activity able to raise worker productivity;
(b) Widespread investment in human capital creates a labour force and skill-base necessary for economic growth;
(c) Human capital incorporates technology as a factor that mediates the relationship between human capital and productivity;
(d) Personal incomes vary according to the amount of human capital investment;
(e) Human capital investment for workers involves direct costs and costs in foregone earnings;
(f) Investment decisions compare the possible future income and consumption abilities to costs of training and deferred consumption;
(g) Societal investment is calculated in the same way;
(h) Human capital advocates private over public investment in education.

In summary, the Human Capital Theory explains wage differentials by the net advantages between jobs. An important premise of the theory is that costs of education and training determine net advantage where personal incomes vary depending on the investment in human capital.

From its inception in the 1770s until present, we have seen continual adjustment to the Human Capital Theory. Adam Smith proposed a theory of Human Capital in 1776 that narrowly viewed humans as capital because of their labour power. Other theorists expanded this view suggesting that humans themselves were not capital, but rather they acquired capital. It took another 200 years for a more formalized definition of the Human Capital Theory with the work of Schultz in the United States, who took inventory of human capital and measured the resulting economic growth. Theorist Becker then measured the profitability of human capital investment through a rate of return, and Psacharopoulos compared rates of return on investment in several countries and compared the profitability of human or physical

capital. These studies agreed that individual investment in education must be understood in terms of the additional income expected as a result. With the promise of increased incomes and the consequent greater circulation of wealth, human capital was seen as a predictable mechanism for economic growth.

Limitations of the Human Capital theory and dramatic shifts in the political and economic environment of the 1980s contributed to the growth of the screening hypothesis that redefined the role of education, implied that education and use of technology are determinants for income, and refocuses on the private investment approach to education and training. Currently, Human Capital Theory presents a case for the economic possibilities of education implying that just as investment in human capital raises worker productivity, larger scale human capital investment contributes to the skills necessary for economic growth. However, there are three important differences from previous forms of the theory: first, it integrates technology as a factor that mediates the relationship between human capital and productivity; second, it adds elements of the screening hypothesis; and third, it advocates private rather than public investment in education.

Assumptions of the Human Capital Theory

This section will describe the tensions that surface around the Human Capital Theory as critics question the scope of its application, the methodological relevance, and the purpose it serves.

As discussed earlier, Human Capitalists suggest a concrete relationship between education and economic performance, yet questions arise on assumptions made about theoretical processes and outcomes. Critics suggest that within the theory

there are numerous assumptions made on nature of economies, and the nature of humans, and the nature of education systems. They suggest that empirical verification continues to stumble due to methodological difficulties with expressed concern about techniques, data reliability, exaggerated support of results, and dismissal of extraneous variables (Diebolt, 2004; Little, 2003; Vandenberghe, 1999; Woodhall, 1987). Diebolt (2004) suggests:

> We still do not know how the development of knowledge relates to economic growth or even if knowledge is a driving force behind it...statistical verification is limited...Formalized analytical procedures remain weak, while an alternative body of possibly more accurate qualitative observations and institutions are insufficiently precise to serve as a base for growth strategy decisions (Diebolt, 2004, 5).

Human Capital Analysis: Challenges and Options

Proponents of the Human Capital Theory assume that people live in an educational meritocracy – that educational investment automatically dictates one's socioeconomic status. In other words, those who invest in education will automatically reap the economic rewards. This makes wide-ranging assumptions about the nature of economies as explained by Baptiste (2001), "the regulatory forces of the market, operating in concert with people's utility-maximizing nature, ensure that everyone receives mutual and just recompense for their efforts and investments" (191). This idea credits the free market as the only institution authorized to regulate and explain human achievements and conversely, the only authority to regulate and explain inequalities. Implicit in it is the notion that markets are perfectly competitive and free, that goods and services are produced and distributed on the basis of supply and demand, and that the market regulates every aspect of human life and social

behaviour (Baptiste, 2001). Social inequalities are not seen as exploitations, but rather as an inevitable outcome of a free market. The "invisible hand" of the free market supposedly coordinates all forces and is the most (or only) legitimate social institution (Baptiste, 2001).

However, a closer look at several exceptions may illustrate that people do not live in a totally free market, but in a political environment where unequal power always structures inequalities. Evidence of classism, racism, and gender-based discrimination, for example, leads to an environment that unfairly advantages some while conferring undue hardship on others. There are reminders such as the potential for less-educated workers to enjoy a productive advantage over their educated counterparts or the potential for income differences to be based on favour rather than merit that would indicate there are significant exceptions to the proposed rule of the free market within the Human Capital Theory (Baptiste, 2001; Little, 2003). These exceptions suggest that social factors make the link between skill acquisition, economic performance, and earnings far from automatic (Baptiste, 2003; Taylor, 1998; Vandenberghe, 1999).

It appears then that education and training, employability, and economic growth relate to extraneous variables that will be examined. There are reports, personal testimonials, and extensive research that suggests that socioeconomic background is a key determinant for one's standing in schooling, training programs, and employment (Taylor, 2002; Vandenberghe, 1999). For example, studies of Coleman et al (1966) and Hanushek (1986) (in Vandenberghe, 1999), revealed that numerous factors may influence education and training attainment and achievement,

with socio-economic background as most influential. A child's socioeconomic background offers a predictable level of educational attainment and achievement, where the more well-off students have higher levels of attainment and tend to do better in school. Financial resources have been found to aid achievement by offering a fixed place for studying, ability to purchase materials for learning, healthier environment with adequate nutrition and sleep, and additional resources to aid in family problems.

Taylor (1998) offers insight on how socioeconomic background may also determine attainment of work and success in the labour force. She suggests that hierarchical work structures strictly divide the planning and management of work and the work itself. Planning and management roles, referred to as mental labour, are associated with the middle-class, while the manual work is associated with the working-class. These divisions have relatively little relevance to the capabilities of different groups of workers but relate more to "strategic position of certain groups within the production process and the power of collective organizations" (Livingstone in Taylor, 1998, 154). In other words, the designation of skills is organized around designations of class which is often passed on from parents to their children. For example, Taylor (1998) suggests that:

> ...the labour market positions occupied by parents of students are likely to influence how these students are positioned within skills discourse. A student whose parents work in a factory or store is likely to have a different conception of skill and of his or her opportunities than will a student whose parents are managers or store owners (154).

This observation suggests a range of effects of socioeconomic status for multiple generations. Socioeconomic status is associated with the type of work in

which a person engages which, in turn, may influence the educational focus for their children. In summary, evidence of class differences in education and training as well as class differences in the work force suggest that the link between educational attainment and success as well as labour force participation is not automatically controlled by the free and fair market.

The cost-benefit discourse also obscures the racialized reality of the labour market. There is much evidence that suggests that race and ethnicity are significant factors in skill acquisition, economic performance, and earnings. The empirical studies of Henry and Ginzberg (in Taylor, 1998) showed that visible minority students are discriminated against in the hiring process. Similarly, Winn (in Taylor, 1998) suggested that immigrants have difficulty in gaining a similar rate of return for their investment in higher education than do Canadian-born workers.

There is also evidence that education and training as well as labour force participation and earnings are influenced by gender. Women historically have been denied equal educational opportunities. There are economic and social reasons for this. Parents, who often make educational decisions for their children, do not see the cost-benefits of educating women. They may see more potential in educating men. Because of social traditions or beliefs, women are not educated because it is not seen to compliment gender-appropriate activities becoming of wives or mothers (King & Hill, 1993).

Similarly, due to gender divisions in the labour market, employability skills of women are not regarded as equal to those of men. What is typically classified as women's skills is often not valued nor seen as appropriate or productive. Therefore,

workplace investments often do not yield the same results for women as for men (Taylor, 1998).

To summarize, educational attainment and achievement and labour force participation are not clearly or uniformly related to free market forces. Citing examples of socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, and gender based discrimination were cited as evidence suggesting that people are either privileged or punished because of their status.

Assumptions about Human Nature

Human Capital theory assumes that humans possess an economic rationality which dictates all actions including their investment in education and their commitment to market goals. Becker (in Baptiste, 2001) contended, "Obviously, the laws of mathematics, chemistry, physics, and biology have tremendous influence on [human behaviour]" (194). These laws, governed by notions of mutual consistency and stable preferences, suggest that learners are mutually and consistently reliant on market analysis to determine learning needs. Learners are seen as knowledge consumers; through education they acquire physical, social, or technological skills considered essential to maximum functioning of the market. Humans are consumers, not producers of knowledge. Therefore, humans are seen as apolitical in orientation and adaptive to market environments. Human capitalists also assume that humans are individualistic and competitive. Motivated by desires to optimize private property, learners may not interact to forge a collective purpose but rather ensure they are individually equipped to thrive through personal investments in education. Baptiste (2001) suggests three criteria used by human capitalists to explain human nature:

(a) When educational programs justify their goals and activities by simply appealing to the 'needs of learners,' when they treat learners' desires as entirely complementary, and when they ignore or discount serious conflicts of interest between learners and other stakeholders, one can be fairly sure that they are operating (wittingly or unwittingly) under the assumptions of human capital theory;
(b) When educational programs justify their goals and activities by appealing to inexorable forces such as economic cycles, demographic changes, global competition, knowledge economy, or skills employees need and when they treat learners as fated beings whose only options are to consume and adapt, chances are they are wedded to human capital theory;
(c) When educational programs treat learners as rugged, indomitable individuals in need of no other but themselves, it is a fairly accurate guess that they are wedded to human capital theory (197).

However, critics point to an overly mechanistic and stale view of human nature posed by human capitalists (Baptiste, 2001, Diebolt, 2004). They propose that individuals cannot be presumed driven solely by material happiness, humans possess a range of desires that are ever-changing, and further, individuals also join in political struggles to attain justice (Baptiste, 2001). In other words, critics argue, humans can be transforming agents.

If the Human Capital assumption is correct that humans are materialists free of social responsibilities, then there are implications for education and training. Education and training would be apolitical in orientation and directed by market analysis, and learners would all have the same needs (Baptiste, 2001). Critics argue that this is not the case. Education and training have a responsibility to pursue an ethical and moral philosophy that is fulfilled through political debate. Ethical education and training would address each learner's needs individually. Ethical

education would address their social, political, and economic environment. Further, ethical education would encourage a collective struggle for common good.

In summary, the Human Capital Theory may be simplistic and incomplete in its assumptions about humans as fated, apolitical, and solely driven by material happiness. Critics suggest that beyond material stability, humans possess a range of desires that are at times competing and at other times complementary, but are always changing. They suggest that social inequalities exist and that education and training programs have a responsibility to address these through attention to the social, political, and economic environment in which it operates.

Assumptions about Education and Training

The Human Capital Theory assumes that education and training functions under objectives of the market and offers the best "value" for learners. However, critics point out, individuals or governments do not always get the best value for their money and educational systems do not automatically respond to their clients (Vandenberghe, 1999). Educational programs tend to be a joint product between multiple stakeholders that influences administrators, teachers, and students. Quality program coordination requires balance between political leaders determining allocation of resources, administrators establishing school protocol and rules to decrease disruption and ensure safety, curriculum and teaching protocols, and finally instructors who are left alone with students for instruction and evaluation. It is a difficult coordination task to balance professional autonomy for each of these players while creating a consensual vision for the program. These stakeholders, for example,

may have drastically different goals for the education and training reflected in varying program policies and measures of success.

Qualities of education and training programs vary dramatically. Even the best organizational arrangements for education and training programming may not ensure high qualities of instruction. Given that instructors play an integral role in instruction and evaluation processes, they are integral for student success. However, due to time constraints, financial constraints, poor consensus of teaching goals, or personal conflicts, instructors may alter the quality of programs. On the other hand, good programs may falter if the principal advocates, coordinators, or instructors leave. In other words, good organization arrangements do not ensure quality instruction and quality instruction does not ensure quality programming if the organizational arrangements are fragile.

Human Capital theorists point out that successful economies rely on educational and training programs to respond to technological and labour market changes. The types of knowledge and skills needed for employment in successful economies are constantly evolving. However, according to Harkin (1997) there has been little parallel change in education and training.

Harkin (1997) in summarizing a 1996 conference on "The Future of Training and Vocational Education in the Global Economy" argues that rapidly changing technology is overhauling knowledge and skills needed for employment, but that education and training "continue in modes more suited to Taylorist models of manufacturing and master/servant models of labour relations" (96). He felt that the skills that are needed for future employment, what Harkin (1996) refers to as a

"communitarian working culture" (97), include effective communication, collaboration, and problem solving, but schools are reproducing divisions between those who work with their heads and those who work with their hands. He determined that often outdated vocational skills are taught using rote memorization at the expense of experiential learning that develops process skills such as problem solving and communication, skills that are learned though a practical application and that often are motivating for students to learn. Harkin (1996) suggests this lag in educational reform, at least in the U.K. and U.S.A., is because educational institutions are poorly funded and therefore have inadequate learning resources and are unable to train educational staff to keep pace with continual technological changes.

Hanushek (in Vandenberghe, 1999) points out that better schools rely on five factors:

a) Schools must be clear about what they are attempting to achieve which is associated with measurable outcomes subject to evaluation;
b) Teachers must offer incentives for students;
c) There needs to be information on pedagogical possibilities;
d) Schools must constantly adapt to meet individual and social demands;
e) Schools must adopt the most productive teaching technology within budget constraints.

In summary, Human Capitalists may assume that education and training systems respond to the market where individuals or governments do not always get the best value for their money and educational systems tailor themselves to fit individual needs. This is apparently not always the case. There is frequent conflict between the goals of administrators, teachers, and students that tip the balance of quality programming. Poor allocation of resources limits learning tools, many instructors cannot cope with rapid educational changes that respond to continual

technological changes, and learners are often not equipped with key education and skills to become leaders in a complex and globalized world. Based on these factors, critics may disagree with the Human Capital assumption that there is a determinant relationship between education and training, labour markets, and technology.

Human Capital Policy as a Powerful Social Lever

Human capital policy, controversial in terms of origin and intent, presents equally controversial outcomes. The assumption that policy based on human capital would reduce poverty has not materialized. This causes proponents of the Human Capital Theory to question its power as a social lever.

Human capitalists suggest a concrete relationship between education and economic success. However, there are gaps in education and training programs that marginally prepare one for employment as well as employers who do not support their worker's educational or training needs. Jensen (2001) suggests, "a trampoline into the labour force does not guarantee a good landing". As illustrated, individuals are not all competing for jobs from an equal playing field and further, conditions of the labour force are experienced differently by different workers. Therefore, we cannot assume that social equity and economic efficiency are complementary in a market economy. When administrators prioritize the goals of economic opportunity they often sacrifice goals of social equality. Corporate involvement in education and training programs creates an environment of privilege for students who can reproduce the employer model while other students, especially students with specialized needs, are left out. However, if this trend continues unchecked, it is not only individuals who are impacted, but ultimately an entire nation suffers.

There are incongruencies between educational policy based on human capital and the economic environment of the 21st century. Economic trends are increasingly complex, globalized, and competitive and, in turn, influence new modes of employment, organizations of work, and individual competencies (Korsgaard, 1997). A comparison of key economic trends to actual training policies reveals areas where certain populations are excluded from equalized participation in the economy.

Heidemann (2001) echoes characteristics of the rapidly transforming economy by summarizing four trends of:

(a) Informization being the raw materials of the future;
(b) Globalization where increasing economic competition is leading to supra-company labour markets;
(c) Traditional manual work being replaced by information-related work;
(d) Individual workers are making new demands on their working environments.

These trends are important as they have motivated certain inclinations in work and training. For example, traditionally an individual would be trained in a single occupation for lifelong employment, with a standard work day, hierarchical organizational structure, and a regular income that may be regulated by collective agreements, within gender-specific roles. However, new forms of employment such as short-term contracts, temporary work, part-time work, and self-employment are on the rise, and these arrangements require exceptional personal competencies. Individuals now require an ability to adapt to change and display creativity and responsibility--all characteristics that build on lifelong learning (Harkin, 1997; Heidemann, 2001).

Based on these economic trends, Heidemann (2001) summarizes some key employment-based requirements:

(a) Acting with persons and dealing with abstract symbols;
(b) Technical and specialized to general and social competencies;
(c) The ability to learn as a basic qualification;
(d) A set of general, personal and social competencies (5).

Heidemann (2001) says as the "new" economy emerges, characteristics of the "old" economy, such as the single life-long career will not disappear. The two economies will exist concurrently; however, the labour force will be more determined by principles of the new economy allowing for a potential for split between the "new" and "old" worker. This raises questions on equal access to the "new" economy through education and training as well as opportunities for "lifelong learning" for low income or disadvantaged persons (Gustavsson, 2002).

Areas for potential exclusion require examination. First, in this emerging economy, there is a need for ongoing education and training. Individuals can expect to change careers several times in their lifetime, requiring localized and specific training at each job site. Employers must have a strong labour force that can respond to rapid technological changes, global competitiveness, and political pressures which also requires ongoing skill building. This may lead to potential exclusion for people lacking the resources or cultural inclinations to continually invest and reinvest in training. This would seem to limit the opportunity for employment and occupational mobility (Ashton Green & Lowe, 1993; Harkin, 1997).

The current policy environment stresses individual responsibility for this learning where individuals pay for their own training and take it during their spare time. This differs from the traditional trade union side that suggests that the employers and/or the government should provide training. The individualistic

approach has created different access to training as resources of time and money are often underdeveloped. While it is often held that companies could greatly advantage their opportunity in the "new economy" by creating structures and processes that foster learning, it is only happening in high-level service and information technology industries, and only to a lesser degree in traditional industries. Companies may lack mechanisms to support further training and individuals are expected to bear the costs, monetary and otherwise, for their education thereby creating differing access to education and training programs (Harkin, 1997; Heidemann, 2001). .

Further, there seems to be predictable demographic of people who do access training, which may confirm that when individuals are completely responsible for their education and training, issues of exclusion also emerge. According to results of a Statistics Canada publication "Recent Trends in Adult Education and Training in Canada" based on Valerie Peters (2003) Adult Education and Training Survey, the adult participation rates in job-related education and training increased substantially; however, the increase was unequal across demographic groups. For example, workers with the least education, regardless of age, were least likely to participate in additional training and, if they did, the training was shorter term. The highest rate of employer-supported job training was by professional and managerial occupations (35%) followed by white-collar workers, in clerical, sales, and service occupations (20%), then blue collar workers (16%). Only about 30% of the total workers receive about 70% of the total training (Harkin, 1997). This would suggest that training participation patterns are more easily predicted by levels of education or more elite workers than other predictors such as age or industry.

Employers have made demands on schools to supply a skilled labour force to meet their economic goals. However, according to Taylor (1998), this also creates an environment of inequality. Employers are negating a responsibility to train their workers, to apply equity practices, or to create jobs. Though these employers may provide schools with a list of skill requirements, they do not indicate how a worker can perform these skills within specific workplace contexts. When these skills are decontextualized, attention is then directed to individual workers rather than the environment in which they work. For example, if workers are disadvantaged in the workplace, it is assumed that they had not acquired the necessary skills in their education or training. The individuals or the educational programs are faulted, not the employers. This leaves room for potentially unfair divisions of labour based on gender, ethnicity, or class (Taylor, 1998). Employers rely on external institutions for the education and training of workers, but by doing so, potentially invite a range of problems such as not having adequately-prepared employees, not providing protection of workers' health and safety, and negating social context where there is potential for the abuse of worker rights (Taylor, 1998).

In summary, the Human Capital Theory may incorrectly promote its value as a social lever. Because of emerging "new" economies and "new" forms of employment, individuals require ongoing education and training. However, guided by a philosophy of private investment, individuals are expected to bear the costs. This can lead to potential exclusion for people lacking the resources or cultural inclinations to continually invest and reinvest in training, and indeed there is a predictable demographic who is benefiting by obtaining better jobs with better pay

because of its access to training while the "old" worker may not be employed or may be subject to abuses of workers' rights once employed. Baptiste (2001) summarizes the human capital fallacy of social improvement with words of warning:

> So, the next time you hear someone claim (or assume) that education or training is a cure all; the next time someone offers technical training as the sole solution to poverty, unemployment, or underemployment; or the next time you hear someone explain and justify differences in earnings simply on the basis of differences in educational attainment, beware! You are probably in the company of a lone wolf, also known as a human capital theorist (198).

This section highlights assumptions of the Human Capital Theory. The Human Capital Theory may be simplistic and incomplete in its assumptions about free market forces that influence economic opportunity, human nature, educational quality, and social mobility. First, educational attainment and achievement as well as labour force participation are not clearly or uniformly related to free market forces. Socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, and gender are markers for educational and training access as well as hiring and promotional patterns. Second, beyond material gratitude, humans can possess a range of ever-changing desires that may include collaboration for socially and environmentally responsible lifestyles. Third, individuals or governments do not always get the best value for their money as administrators, teachers, and students juggle values and resources. Finally, related to the previous assumptions, the Human Capital Theory does not promote social justice. While the theory explains individuals' positions in the labour force in terms of their productivity, other factors such ability or inclination to invest in education and training determine social equality. The Human Capital Theory takes for granted that

this is an apolitical and unchanging world. Its optimism as a social lever requires further analytical and political development.

The following chapter, *Human Capital Theory and Government of Alberta Programs for Aboriginal Employment,* describes the practical application of The Human Capital Theory in a Government of Alberta initiative for Aboriginal education and training. Despite successes of the First Nations Training-to-Employment initiative, Aboriginal people still do not participate equally in Alberta's economy. This chapter illustrates numerous barriers many Aboriginal people face in their training, employment, and leadership accomplishments.

Chapter IV
Human Capital Theory and Government of Alberta Programs for Aboriginal Employment

Government of Alberta Services to Aboriginal People

As discussed, the Alberta conservative government under Premier Ralph Klein boasts an "Alberta Advantage" – a thriving economy built on an economic plan to facilitate business objectives by capitalizing on natural resource extraction and a restructuring plan to cut cross-departmental budgets, reduce the number of government departments, privatize some government services, and make program delivery more efficient (Mansell, in Taylor, 2002). The plan acknowledges a strong economy while continuing to enhance economic growth in the province, as illustrated by the following excerpt from their Strategic Business Plan (Government of Alberta Strategic Business Plan, 2004).

> Enormous achievements have been realized. Deficits are a thing of the past and the debt is almost eliminated. The economy has grown strongly and steadily. Alberta's outstanding economic growth has created over 375,000 new jobs in just 10 years. Regulations have been streamlined and government has become more effective, efficient, adaptable and value driven. Personal and business taxes are lower (Government of Alberta Strategic Business Plan, 2004).

As this passage illustrates, Alberta's economic prosperity is supported by a healthy job market where average annual employment in 2004 increased by 40,000 jobs over 2003. Approximately 434,000 new jobs were created between 1994 and 2004. Alberta's average unemployment rate in 2004 was the lowest in Canada at 4.6% (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Economic and Demographic Analysis, Data Development and Evaluation, 2004; Government of Alberta, Alberta's Economic Results, n.d.).

In contrast to this picture of Alberta's economy characterized by prosperity and growth is a picture of First Nations' communities often characterized by poverty and social ills due to unequal access to goods, services, and opportunities. By every common indicator, including levels of education, employment rates, and income levels, there are marked disparities between First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples and other Albertans (Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative, 2006; Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Economic and Demographic Analysis, 2004; Madden, 2004).

To illustrate such disparities, the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (Statistics Canada, 2001) researched the economic conditions for Aboriginal peoples throughout Alberta, both on and off-reserve. Key indicators for economic conditions are rates of unemployment that can be compared. On one reserve neighbouring Edmonton, 56.2% of adults were not working for pay or were self-employed in 2001, while the unemployment rate was 22%. In all of Alberta unemployment rates for Aboriginal people was 10.7%, almost three times the unemployment rate for all Albertans (Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2001).

Edmonton is home to 33% of the total number of Aboriginal people in Alberta who do not live on a First Nations Reserve. Though the Aboriginal population in Edmonton is not as affluent as the rest of the city's population, this group is making significant economic progress through self-employment. The Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative (2006) indicates:

> Aboriginal people in Edmonton earn the same proportion of their total income as the general populations (78%), but their average earnings and median income are much lower, probably due to higher

> unemployment levels and lower-paying jobs, which reflect their relatively lower levels of educational attainment (3).

In 2001, the statistics for Aboriginal Adults in the Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area indicate 42.1% of adults were not working for pay or were self-employed, while the unemployment rate was 13% (Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2001).

Off-Reserve Aboriginal peoples' statistics released by Alberta Human Resources and Employment for October 2005 indicate an unemployment rate for All Aboriginal People Off-Reserve at 6.0%, American Indian population at 8.9% and Métis at 4.0%. In every category, women had a higher rate of unemployment than men. For example, the category All Aboriginal Women had a 12.1% unemployment rate while men had a 9.1%. In every category the unemployment rates were lower with completed post secondary education (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Labour Force Statistics, 2005).

While statistics speak to general patterns of community conditions and human well-being, they often do not present a holistic view of issues since statistics alone cannot illustrate some of the lived realities of people. However, in a detailed presentation from the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative (2006), and based on responses from a series of consultations in Edmonton, 14% of respondents suggested that a significant issue facing urban Aboriginal people in Edmonton is employment and appropriate skills training. Added to this, one anonymous participant responded:

> There is a need for Aboriginal people to get adequately educated and get trained in different trades and professions. This will help them to establish financially, become a contributing member of the society and

> to wipe out the tarnished image of Urban Aboriginals. Better education and employment training will lead to: Better employment, lower unemployment, better (safe & adequate) housing, better social integration with the community at large, lower rates of drug and alcohol abuse, better physical and mental health…lower juvenile delinquency rate (Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative, 2006, 62).

In summary, in 2005, the unemployment rates for Aboriginal people were higher than other Albertans. The statistics for on-reserve Aboriginals had even higher rates of unemployment than for off-reserve Aboriginals. Statistics show a marked discrepancy between Alberta's Aboriginal people, both on reserve and off-reserve and non-Aboriginals. Unemployment rates are higher and often reflect lower rates of education and training. Aboriginal women have the highest rates of unemployment in all categories despite overall life improvement related to employment.

The Government of Alberta acknowledges these socio-economic disparities and has established several frameworks and action plans. A 2000 document "Strengthening Relationships – The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework" (Government of Alberta, 2000) outlines a cross–ministry structure to develop policies that address First Nation, Métis, and other Aboriginal issues. The primary goals of improving socio-economic opportunities and clarifying roles and responsibilities of federal, provincial, and Aboriginal governments and communities will be addressed by examining barriers to Aboriginal participation in the Alberta economy as well as initiatives for capacity building with regard to community and individual employment. The primary mechanism for such personal improvements is through partnerships between the Government of Alberta, industry, and First Nations, Métis and other Aboriginal communities (Alberta Human Recourses and

Employment, A Partnership Framework, 2002). The suggested benefits of increased First Nations, Métis, and other Aboriginal participation in the Alberta economy are:

(a) Access to new markets for Alberta's corporate sector;
(b) Gain Aboriginal support for economic and business development;
(c) Establish partnerships to cut costs and develop a stable, long-term workforce, particularly in remote areas;
(d) Assist Aboriginal communities in development of business and managerial expertise, financing, contracting opportunities, training, and employment (Government of Alberta, 2000)

First Nations Training-to-Employment Program

The Aboriginal Policy Framework guides all provincial government ministries including Human Resources and Employment, which plays a primary role in developing and implementing employment strategies to improve the participation of First Nations, Métis, and other Aboriginal groups in the economy. A key initiative is a multi-stakeholder training-to-employment partnership between Alberta Human Resources & Employment, the private sector, and First Nations, Métis, and Aboriginal groups that is designed to train and employ Aboriginal participants. This initiative, called First Nations Training-to-Employment (FNTE), is a skills-training program specific to First Nations people, primarily on-reserve, and tries to link training to local business opportunities. Partnerships between private sectors, government, unions, training providers, and First Nations attempt to improve the employability skills of First Nations people and therefore increase their participation in the economy. The "First Nations Training-to-Employment-Interim Program Guidelines" states:

> These partnerships will help provide First Nations people with the necessary skills and knowledge in order to obtain and maintain employment. Acquired employability skills will be both marketable to employers and transferable to a variety of employment settings. **The**

> **overall expected outcome of such partnerships is sustainable employment** ...
>
> ...The elements of the program will reflect an integrated approach and will include, but are not be limited to: a focus on life management and employment coping/job readiness skills, employability skills, work related literacy skills, specific occupation skills, paid work experience or training on-the-job, placement, follow-up and employment support (maintenance) services for program graduates. As much as possible each project will be tailored to individual needs, assisting First Nations people with their career goals, addressing employment barriers and supporting their career path aspirations (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2002, 2).

It is recognized that clients eligible for the program have limited academic competencies or credentials and possess a variety of barriers that have previously affected schooling, labour market attachment, or vocational skill development.

Contracts to administer the First Nations Training-to-Employment (FNTE) are negotiated after a competition process and are awarded based on a partnership between at least one First Nations, Tribal Council, Treaty Organization, and one employment provider (e.g. industry or business, union, or labour organization), and finally, Alberta Human Resources and Employment. Partnerships can be broadened to include other Aboriginal groups with the agreement of the three principle partners.

Evaluations are based on numerous components of the program and occur at various stages of the contract. Ongoing contract monitors focus on completion of administrative duties, and student progress, attendance, student employment, and follow-up with student. Success rates such as completion rates and client satisfaction vary by contract but, generally, FNTEP expects at least 70% of clients in training to be employed within six months of completion of the program.

Alberta Human Resources and Employment contracts individual programs to service providers to coordinate the First Nations Training-to-Employment program for Aboriginal clients. The program content focuses training in specific market sectors that express labour shortages or growth potential – an approach to improving the employability skills for clients. One branch within Human Resources and Employment, Data Development and Evaluation, recently prepared a document "Preliminary Results of Alberta's Occupational Demand and Supply Outlook, 2004-2014" (2004) to better understand and respond to the demand for workers in Alberta by focusing on occupation groups where there are acute skills shortages. The purpose was to help aid programs and policies to strike a balance between employer demands for workers and educational supply of educated and skilled people. Input from the private sector partners helps determine the curriculum for the education and training programs. For example, in Alberta there is an acute labour shortage in specific trades such as carpentry and these shortages become the focus for future training.

This section examined opportunities provided by the Alberta government, specifically Alberta Human Resources and Employment, for individual improvement with regard to Aboriginal community and individual employment. Partnerships between multiple stakeholders attempt to improve the employability skills of First Nations people and therefore increase their participation in the economy. The First Nations Training-to-Employment program selects eligible clients who meet particular needs criteria to attend training that gears them toward occupational shortages in the economy. And, while the program hinges its funding on the number of students

employed within their area of training, it also focuses on student capacity building through a life-skills component and ongoing access to additional services.

Personal Observations

As an Intern Project Coordinator for the Aboriginal Services Framework with Alberta Human Resources and Employment (2005-206), I had the opportunity to participate in various consultation processes and work on various committees addressing Aboriginal training for employment. For example, I participated in the Steering Committee for the Edmonton Region Plan for Coordination of Youth Services, met with representatives from the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, and served on the Aboriginal Advisory Committee formed out of the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation that drew from a cross-section of representatives from business, education, Aboriginal leaders, and municipal and provincial governments. I also reviewed several documents such as Pihtakosiwin, Urban Youth Needs Assessment conducted by Oteenow Employment and Training Society (2000), as well as published community consultations conducted by the Métis Nation of Alberta (2004).

I observed that training programs such as the First Nations Training-to-Employment promotes the building of employability skills for Aboriginal people to increase their productivity and support of the provincial economy. However, despite such programs, there continues to be disparities between some Aboriginals and other Albertans (Government of Alberta, Aboriginal Policy Framework, 2000). This training program, unfortunately, does not automatically ensure parity for Aboriginal people and suggests a number of factors that may negate economic success including

personal and individualized barriers, barriers imposed by the business environment, and policy-related barriers.

Personal and Individualized Factors as Barriers

Clients who are eligible to attend training programs are expected to have minimal barriers to success. They are expected to be ready, willing, and able to participate in the all components of the program. For example, ready, willing and able individuals should maintain a healthy lifestyle, and despite having little or no direct career experience, they should show interest in their training program topic.

However, many individuals in need of such a program will experience personal barriers. An informal survey conducted on Aboriginal Service Providers in Edmonton (2006) indicates that a client participating in such an employment program may experience one or several barriers such as lack of education, lack of housing and transportation, personal or familial issues, lack of supports, criminal history, ongoing disabilities, and experience social bias. All of these barriers may contribute to a lack of career direction or stability in a training program.

In fact, five main types of barriers or gaps for Aboriginals seeking employment and training have been identified that include transitions, support systems, retention, quality of education and training, and employer-imposed barriers.

(a) Transitions – Aboriginals face numerous challenges when dealing with transitions such as moving from rural to urban settings, moving from unemployment to employment, and moving from one cultural context to another.

(b) Support systems – Many Aboriginal people state that lack of knowledge about and inability to access support systems is a major barrier to their pursuit of employment. There is often confusion around eligibility for services as there are restrictions based on status. Further, many criticize the quality of service such as having inexperienced counselors or

trainers. Finally, there are few training programs available that can accommodate special needs such as disabilities, single parents, or older workers.

(c) Retention – Many Aboriginal respondents face challenges once they are in a training program or once employed. Many feel that they do not fit in; they feel unwelcome and uncomfortable. Some may struggle with family, finances, or other personal issues. Finally, some state that they are not adequately prepared for what is required of them on the job. For example, they may not be aware of job culture such as showing up on time or calling if unable to attend.

(d) Quality of education and training – Many Aboriginal clients have had limited success in previous schooling. The completion rate from high school for Aboriginals is 9.2%, as compared to 11.8% for non-Aboriginal students (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Economic and Demographic Analysis, 2004) and many feel that their education was substandard to that of other Albertans. They struggle when they encounter training programs that expect high academic requirements. Additionally, many feel that employment hiring standards require review as they feel that a grade 12 minimum may be overstated in some careers.

(e) Employer imposed barriers – Many Aboriginals feel that potential employers lack the willingness to strive towards creating workplace diversity. There is either misunderstanding of or prejudice against Aboriginal people on many job sites, and efforts to address such issues result in programs of assimilation rather than programs of accommodation.

In my experience, there is no example of a "typical" client who may access training programs because the histories, goals, and needs are unique to each person. However, it may be useful to describe client profiles in order to understand some of the individualized barriers to success. One Edmonton-based service provider provided an imaginary client profile that may mirror the profile of an actual client.

> Profile # 1: Heza is 28 years old and has a grade 9 education. He has worked labour jobs for four years but is sick of dead-end labour jobs and wants to get into the trades. He is thinking of plumbing, pipe-fitting or welding. Heza is of Aboriginal descent and has numerous

grief and loss issues due to high death rates in his family. He also has a criminal record and has served jail time on and off for eight years.

He started working at labour jobs as a teenager and has quite a diverse array of transferable skills from working odd jobs in prison and at temporary agencies. He has never had a résumé because of his method of a job search has been to just show up on a job site or go through a temporary agency.

Profile # 2: Debbie is a 28 year old Aboriginal woman and is now a single mother of three. Debbie has separated from her husband, left the reserve, and moved to the city approximately 2 months ago. Up until now, Debbie has been a stay-at-home mom although she graduated from high school. She has only ever worked as a house cleaner for a private individual on her reserve to make a little extra money. She is currently receiving Income Supports and wants to get out and find a job; however, she has not had a résumé since high school, she has never had in interview, and she has no idea what type of work she is qualified for.

A key theme in many consultations is that Aboriginal people feel that as individuals they have to "fit" into current systems of education and employment that do not reflect Indigenous perspectives. They feel a disconnect between their worldview and that of the dominant system, and this creates a dilemma for students who feel they are being encouraged to accept either a silencing or degrading of their heritage. For example, part of my role as an assistant to various contract managers was to attend the training site and meet students in a class setting to evaluate effectiveness of the program and consider future training components. A common experience in listening at the classes and interviewing the students was that students were frequently warned about the perils of Alberta's working culture, and that inevitably they would encounter racism on the jobsite. Students were encouraged to maintain a positive attitude despite these "tests". This may suggest that Aboriginal students are likely to encounter discrimination in their future employment but have

not been given the tools to respond to it in constructive ways. This may contribute to Aboriginal people feeling distant from dominant systems.

But students have also identified personal factors that may contribute to program success. They recognize that program success as well as equalized participation in the labour force relates the issues beyond skill training. As Mayer (in Graham and Peters, 2002) points out:

> On the one hand, policy choices must focus on the need to provide education and labour market training that assist Aboriginal people in cities, particularly youth, to participate in the economic market place. On the other hand, the public policy agenda must also consider the fact that not all will be willing or able to participate in the mainstream market economy of cities and the world. The prospect of economic development breeding social exclusion is very real…we need policy ideas that mitigate that (in Graham & Peters, 2002, 4).

While policy based on the Human Capital Theory attempts to reduce rates of unemployment through skill-building, it is assumed that all learners will adapt to their economic environment to contribute to healthy economies. However, this may downplay social, economic, and political conditions of some Aboriginal people and create the potential for a split population between those who can succeed in the "new" economy and those who are left behind.

This section presents possible barriers for Aboriginals through an exploration of personal and individual factors that inhibit educational and economic success. Social policy initiatives that focus on poverty and social dislocation may preclude issues of culture and recognition – issues fundamental to Aboriginal identities. Graham and Peters (2002) suggest, "The challenge then, as it relates to economic competitiveness, is not just to improve the labour force readiness of the Aboriginal population. It also relates to fundamental issues of culture and rights" (28). Personal

barriers such as lack of housing, lack of education, or mental or physical disabilities contribute to difficulties with transitions from one familiar cultural setting to another. This makes it important for training programs to provide quality support systems so that students have proper tools to recognize and to address potential job conflicts along the way. Therefore, policy for equalized participation in the economy also relates to issues of economic opportunity, mobility, housing, and childcare.

The Business Environment as a Barrier

In addition to personal and individual factors, there are also barriers for Aboriginal people in obtaining employment after their training. This section will identify key barriers the business community presents in hiring, retaining, and advancing Aboriginal employees. It will also identify resources that address healthier relationships between the business communities and potential Aboriginal employees.

The Aboriginal Advisory Committee (2005) asked the question: "What are the barriers for businesses, especially small businesses, in hiring Aboriginals?" The key themes identified were employer attitude and lack of support systems.

(a) Attitude – There is an underestimation of how Aboriginal people may contribute to business and therefore they are not considered for key positions. Many employers lack the willingness to take on the challenges of addressing diversity issues. For example, stereotyping or racism on job sites goes undetected. Further, if employers do address the issue of diversity, they expect that Aboriginal employees will assimilate to non-Aboriginal ways.

(b) Support systems – Employers often communicate a lack of support systems to facilitate the hiring process. They do not know where to find well-qualified workers, they do not know how to integrate employees into the workplace environment, and they are intimidated by potential human rights issues that may arise at work - despite several tools that have been created to assist employers with Aboriginal hiring practices.

The Urban Aboriginal Workforce Advisory Committee (2005) came up with three suggestions for the business community to embrace Aboriginal employment.

(a) Increasing public awareness - A more vigorous communications strategy to promote an Aboriginal hiring strategy and to emphasize the mutual benefits to Aboriginal people, the business community, and society. This may also include providing profiles of capable, committed, and responsible Aboriginal employees as "success stories". Through a promotion of "best practices" of solicitation and procurement strategies, other businesses could share ideas and facilitate inter-organizational cooperation.

(b) Raise issue profile – It is suggested the businesses have a responsibility to pay attention to the Aboriginal populations and provide appropriate responses. They must participate in needs assessments of these populations and conduct hiring, retention and promotions accordingly. One suggestion to raise the issues is to identify a visible and articulate "champion" such as the city mayor to regularly communicate the importance of such issues to a range of audiences.

(c) Increase interaction – Aboriginal people and business people need to find ways to increase overall interaction to build positive working relationships. Increased awareness and comfort with each other can improve the training and employment experience.

(d) Resource availability – In many cases the business community, especially small businesses, express a lack of capacity to recruit and retain Aboriginal employees. Further, the best educated Aboriginals are in high demand by government and major industry so small businesses do not have the means to attract them. However, improved availability of training, especially in-house training, could facilitate a more hospitable working environment.

Information to assist employers has been published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, such as the "Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI) Employer Toolkit" (Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada, 1998) that was designed to assist employers to become more knowledgeable about Aboriginal employment issues, to enhance employer skills, and to provide a network of provincial supports.

This toolkit addresses the demographic and economic diversity of Aboriginal people across Canada by providing national and regionally-specific information.

Information presented in the toolkit includes demographic and statistical information, legislation and policies affecting Aboriginal employment, effective practices for recruitment, retention, and advancement of Aboriginal employees, and Aboriginal awareness issues such as protocols with Elders, historic milestones, and linguistic and community groups. Finally, the toolkit provides a list of resources available for employers to recruit Aboriginal employees, for Aboriginal awareness training, and other websites.

As well, Alberta Human Resources and Employment published "Diversity – A Strategy to Meet your Need for Skilled Workers" (2002), suggesting that the fastest-growing portion of Alberta's population is Aboriginal peoples who therefore are an important source of labour skills for the economy. This publication is designed for Alberta employers and frequently references Human Capital Theory. For example, the introductory paragraph suggests that a model of recruiting and retaining employees from a diverse labour market will increase the "human capital" of the company (2) and promotes financial goals by suggesting, "striving to achieve a diverse workforce is not an end in itself but an action that can improve a company's performance in the provincial, national and global economies" (3).

This document makes some important suggestions to employers. It promotes recruitment from a diverse pool of talent such as from men and women who are Aboriginal, immigrants, older workers, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and youth. It suggests that the Aboriginal population is increasing twice as fast as the

rest of Alberta's population and, within a decade, Aboriginal workers will represent one out of every five new entrants into the labour market. It provides brief passages from established businesses such as AEC Oil & Gas, Calgary, that says, "Hiring Aboriginal people through local employment strengthens the company by providing new ideas and enhancing its relationship with the communities where it operates (10).

In summary, these publications are written for employers to help address their labour shortages in an increasingly competitive labour market. They promote hiring practices that are free from bias, workplaces that are free from discrimination, and equal opportunities for promotions. This includes dispelling myths about Aboriginal people and understanding cultural protocols. The potential benefits for Aboriginal communities, business communities, and society as whole are great when more people come to understand and overcome barriers that Aboriginal people face in their pursuit for employment.

The Policy Environment as a Barrier

A third barrier that inhibits Aboriginal economic success is governmental policies related to education and training programs. First, government policy does not address the diversity between and among Aboriginal people, and second, methods of classifying Aboriginal people who are eligible for education and training programs are confusing and frustrating. Finally, the policy relationships between various levels of federal, provincial, local, and Aboriginal governments are a central issue for determining budget allocations, program structures, funding processes, public accountability, and program sustainability and are therefore critical for comprehensive policy and programming.

A more comprehensive Aboriginal policy environment includes a requirement for a more complex political understanding of the demographics of Aboriginal people—particularly in regards to the pattern of increased urbanism and mobility. According to the 2001 Statistics Canada census, as much as 33% of the self-identifying Aboriginal population live in Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) or cities populated with at least 100, 000 people, and another 21% live in smaller urban areas (Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2001). The explosion of the urban Aboriginal population is, in part, because of the increase in numbers of Registered Indians due to the 1985 amendment of the Indian Act that reinstated peoples who had previously lost their status. Additionally, Métis or non-Status Indians are increasingly self-identifying and reporting their ethnic affiliations between census and generations (Graham & Peters, 2002).

Edmonton has the second largest Aboriginal population of any city in Canada with 30, 365 people. This population grew at a rate of 1017 people per year between 1996 and 2001. Two Aboriginal people moved to Edmonton for every one who departed, and about half of the newcomers were children born to these new Aboriginal residents (Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative, 2006). These figures suggest there is no clear non-urban/urban "divide" of people because of interconnections of mobility, culture, and politics. Further, many Aboriginal people regularly move back and forth from the reserves to urban centers and for different reasons as they are neither uniformly ghettoized nor uniformly disadvantaged (Graham & Peters, 2002). In other words, there is great diversity between and among Aboriginal people.

The policy environment also must reflect this diversity as much policy addresses a uniform Aboriginal population and suggests "Aboriginal solutions" that do not account for the diversity. The current Aboriginal policy agenda for governments might therefore expand its focus from poverty reduction to include larger issues of social dislocation and identity.

A second policy issue involves clarifying the "jurisdictional maze" that Aboriginal peoples must maneuver to in order to access services. Distinctions between Status and Non-status Indians, on/off reserve residence, Inuit, and Métis classifications are confusing, yet important, because they currently determine access to programs. These jurisdictional issues are foundational for contemporary policy analysis because, to cite one example, access to services hinges on these classifications and must not create social exclusion.

The clarification of jurisdiction between Aboriginal people and the Crown were formalized with three significant legislative measures: The Royal Proclamation, Confederation, and the Indian Act. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is a document that established the terms of the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown through issues of title and fiduciary trust. The historical negotiation of treaties determined multiple Aboriginal rights such as land ownership and the forum for land transfer to the Crown. Further, with Confederation in 1867, the Crown became divided into federal and provincial governments and, under section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, the federal government established responsibility for "Indians and/Lands reserved for the Indians" while the provinces established responsibility for

lands, health, welfare, education, administration of justice, and municipal institutions (Graham & Peters, 2002).

The federal Indian Act (1876) placed further distinctions on issues of status that, to date, administratively and socially separate Aboriginal peoples. Métis status became distinct from Indian status and their rights were extinguished through the issuing of script that could be exchanged for land or money. "Status" Indians also became distinct from "Non-Status" Indians. Typically, a "Status" Indian holds membership with an Indian band, which is usually tied to a reserve. Therefore, 91(24) stipulated that policy responsibilities related to Indians on reserve land and, after 1939, to Inuit as well.

Contemporary policy developments have changed classifications of status for Aboriginal people. Contemporary statements, under section 35(1) of the 1982 Constitution Act, recognize and affirm the Aboriginal and treaty rights of Indians, Métis, and Inuit (Monture-Angus, 1999)[3]. Additionally, the Government of Canada recently extended the eligibility for education-based financial support for those Status Indians living off-reserve, though non-Status and Métis students remain ineligible (Graham & Peters, 2002). Further, the passage of the Indian Act Amendment, Bill C-31, allowed bands to establish their own membership codes and maintain membership lists, which allowed many women who had lost their status through marriage to non-status men to be reinstated as status Indians and as band members. However, this sometimes created new pressures for bands because of the influx of potential new

[3] Activist and scholar Patricia Monture-Angus (1999) notes that section 35(1) of the Constitution recognizes and affirms Aboriginal rights. She notes the language "recognition" and "affirmation", as a legal standard, "sets a serious goal" (47) by insinuating that the Aboriginal rights precede the Canadian legislation.

members who were eligible for housing, educational funding, or other services. Tensions can arise between those with newly-acquired status, those who never lost their status and lived on-reserve, and band leaders (Graham & Peters, 2002). In summary, these legislative measures categorize First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or other Aboriginal people for purposes of forming legal jurisdictional boundaries. However, these categories are changing with contemporary legislation suggesting that past classifications do not represent the best interests of the groups and that these classifications are unfixed and perhaps arbitrary markers.

These contemporary policy developments often add to jurisdictional confusion and tension where policy does not reflect demographic and political reality. There are people who identify as First Nations peoples but lack status. Further, Métis and non-status Indians face jurisdictional limbo, meaning that they are unclear if they fall under provincial or federal jurisdiction. Many need services but are ineligible, and this contributes to the perception of lack of policy coherence, policy and program coordination and organizational coordination. In this way, Aboriginal policy serves as a barrier to individuals for program access, and Aboriginal people must maneuver this complex jurisdictional maze in order to access services.

As an alternative, some question whether policy would be more inclusive and effective if it disregarded questions of status. One approach is the contested practice of maintaining a status-blind approach to services. This means ignoring political and geographic distinctions of Aboriginal people and offering services to all Aboriginal people despite legal status or heritage and not consider on or off-reserve residence (Graham and Peters, 2002).

National responses cited in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (in Graham & Peters, 2002) suggest that status-blind delivery could do more harm that good. Because it conceals unique identities of Aboriginal people, it could ignore important historical or geographical circumstances that may be imperative to effective service delivery. In short, it could potentially lead to assimilation, a difficult theme of past government programming policy.

In solving issues of jurisdiction, cultural recognition as well as equitable access must be demonstrated. In their paper, "Aboriginal Communities and Urban Sustainability", Graham and Peters (2002) recognize that historically, provincial and municipal governments have refused specific responsibility to develop policy statements for Aboriginal services by stating "they have neither the capacity nor, generally speaking, the desire to work in the domain of affirming existing Aboriginal and treaty rights" (9). Municipal governments have been inhibited for reasons of lack of jurisdictional financial ability as well as a hesitation to address equity legislation. The apparent disjuncture between levels of government, with few exceptions, rests with their rejection of responsibility specifically related to Aboriginal people.

However, governments as employers, regulators, sources of transfer payments, and taxing authorities should take leadership in these complex issues by creating and enforcing functional policy and indeed are increasingly aware that a key ingredient for concerted policy thinking and action is political collaboration. This requires leadership in developing horizontal policy and program linkages within the federal government and constructive vertical linkages with provinces and municipalities. The multiple levels of government have the capacity to take a

leadership role, through collaboration, to form a constructive policy environment for Aboriginal people.

Beyond federal, provincial, and municipal governmental responsibility to address Aboriginal policy, First Nations' governments are also being asked to develop policy on account of their off-reserve members. This could potentially relieve the federal or provincial governments from some of the financial and administrative responsibilities for people with ties to a reserve and allow for increased focus on Aboriginal peoples who are not from reserve settings. Additionally, there is also growing support for the emergence of urban Aboriginal organizations to create initiatives that address local and immediate Aboriginal needs (Graham & Peters, 2002). These solutions, according to Graham and Peters (2002), offer greater competence for policy leadership that requires updated analysis on issues of urban poverty as well as Aboriginal rights and culture.

As illustrated, there is a primary need for greater federal, provincial, and municipal cooperation. A second suggestion is a call for greater Aboriginal involvement either from band leadership or from urban Aboriginal organizations. Effective policy for Aboriginal issues may require a further step. A third step calls for increased partnership between the two requiring a long-term commitment to change historical patterns in leadership, healing, local control, and self-government processes. Whereas it has been common practice for Canadian Government to do to or do for Aboriginal people, the direction forward includes authentic collaboration (Eberts, 1997).

The Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Dialogue Process (Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative, 2006) dialogues between a wide cross section of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to strengthen the relationships between the City of Edmonton and First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Non-Status people in creating long-term improvements for Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton. Some of the suggestions for improving relations between municipal authorities and Aboriginal communities are (from Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative, 2006):

> Have all of the City Counsellors, the Mayor, Next Generation Task Force take site visits to the river valley and meet with the homeless Urban Aboriginal people that inhabit the river valley. Take a site visit to North Edmonton and visit some of the apartments that Urban Aboriginal people are inhabiting. Some of which are in horrific condition. Take a site visit to the Ban Calf Robe society, Canadian Native Friendship Centre, Sun and Moon Visionaries Aboriginal Artisans Society, Nechi to put a face to the individual that they have been mandated to govern.
>
> Hire more Aboriginal people to work for the city in all departments.
>
> Talk with them (The people, not chief and council).
> (Anonymous in Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord, 2006, 77).

This excerpt illustrates ways for governments and Aboriginal leaders to work together for stronger policy. The themes of greater Aboriginal representation in governments, greater awareness of Aboriginal issues, and greater Aboriginal visibility are suggestions to foster these partnerships.

This policy barrier suggests that strong collaborative partnerships between multiple levels of governments, band governments, and local communities can build policy understanding and capacity building. Part of effective policy involves creating a more holistic understanding of the demographic of Aboriginal peoples. The population growth is unprecedented so service planning and delivery requires

consideration on sophisticated patterns of mobility, culture, and politics. This means that we must be cognizant of the colonial history that has classified and divided Aboriginal people according to status. These definitions add to confusion and frustration for those Aboriginal people who must maneuver a bureaucratic maze in order to access to services. Successful policy hinges on the ability to clarify appropriate roles of multiple governments and to deliver services that address lived experiences and diverse histories and assure successful futures.

The Policy Process as a Barrier

A fourth barrier for Aboriginal success is the implementation of appropriate policy process that researches community needs and local concerns. As illustrated, educational and training policy for Aboriginal employment could be strengthened with recognition of cultural diversity while maintaining equitable services. This may only be achieved with a policy building process that is inclusive to multiple stakeholders. This section will examine the process of how policy is made, implemented and evaluated.

One of the most important aspects of any democratic policy process is consultation that involves researching perceived needs and solutions to benefit peoples or communities. A consultation process with greater range of inputs has the potential to involve more people with diverse voices and therefore become more democratic (Taylor, 2002).

On the other hand, a consultation process may not be as democratic as it appears. What may be called a multi-stakeholder consultation may be manipulated to legitimize a preconceived agenda under the guise of consensus. For example, the

consultation may be based on political interests of generating support for an initiative. It may strategically involve only those who are expected to sponsor the success of the program. By the same token, the consulting body may manipulate the policy consultation for other self-interest reasons such as to mobilize consent for policies or reduce conflict or deflect public critique. Through picking and choosing the opinions that make it on record for the final report, the consulting group can say, "we have heard a diversity of opinions", although it may deliberately and selectively include input. Holberg (quoted in Taylor, 2002) cautions that the manipulation of a consultation may lead to the following:

> (a) a blurring of state authority and public interest;
> (b) the assumption that public interest arises out of amalgamation of private interests;
> (c) interest group participants suggest that they are representative of the balance of views in society (55).

There is evidence to suggest that governments are increasingly consulting private sectors in their policy building process for education and training, resulting in policy that favours corporate interests (Taylor, 2002). Taylor (2002) suggests that we need be critical of the education/training policy masks itself as a multi-stakeholder consultation, yet may emphasize industry voices (policy process issue) that precipitates action to form industry-government partnerships (policy product issue). She warns that corporate actions are not selfless and that questions should arise on issues of inclusion, exclusion, and accountability within policy. According to Taylor (2002), "the discourse on education for economic prosperity focuses attention on 'supply side' rather than 'demand side' issues…From this perspective, key players are educators as developers of appropriately skilled labour, employers as purchasers

of that labour and government as a coordinator of the matching process" (56). In other words, when the voices of stakeholders are not as prominent as industry voices, education and training programs are affected. Schools and training facilities become suppliers of an appropriately skilled labour force based on the demands of industry.

Selective listening and reporting of interests between labour, employers, private, and public interests can result in different definitions of a problem. For example, a focus on the supply/demand ratio of the labour market raises alarms about the shortage of skilled workers. But it may not address equity issues related to transitions from unemployment to employment, particularly for traditionally disadvantaged groups. And, if significant portions of a population remain disadvantaged, questions are raised on the ability of governments to remain and be perceived to retain a leadership role as a protector of public interests in the area of education and training for employment.

In summary, this discussion of individual, business and policy barriers suggests that the human capital promise that education and training will lead to productive employees who can invest in their local and national economy has not materialized for all Aboriginal people. Education and training programs have not automatically created the same levels of well-being and qualities of life as for many other groups. Personal and individual factors such as lack of housing, lack of education, or mental or physical disabilities contribute to difficulties with transitions from one familiar cultural setting to another and an inability to feel attachment or belonging to workplace environments. Therefore, policy for equalized participation in the economy also relates to issues of access to basic necessities such as housing

and culturally appropriate services such as childcare. A truly healthy economy can and should include social and cultural dimensions of all populations.

While there are barriers of lack of information and lack of support in building relationships between non-Aboriginal business owners and Aboriginal employees, Aboriginal people are important sources for qualified labour. Especially with projected labour shortages, business are starting to develop equity policies and practices that will support new Aboriginal recruits, current Aboriginal employees, as well as non-Aboriginal workers on the jobsite. Additional resources have provided information and important regional references to assist businesses address fair hiring practices, fun and productive workplaces, and equal opportunities for promotions.

The policy environment presents significant barriers in accessing services. Recommendations for greater policy understanding include strong collaborative partnerships between multiple levels of governments, band governments, and local communities to create a more holistic understanding of the diverse cultures and politics of Aboriginal peoples. It also may mean that governments reevaluate the policy environment so that service delivery acknowledges individual identities while also offering services to all. Successful policy hinges on the ability to clarify appropriate roles of multiple governments and to deliver services that address lived experiences and diverse histories and assure successful futures. This may be achieved through a fair and transparent policy process that includes multiple interests to address community needs and concerns.

The following chapter, *Solutions for Effective Aboriginal Policy and Programs*, offers suggestions to improve Aboriginal policy so that Aboriginal people

may achieve greater success in their education and training while also developing experience in local control of educational institutions. Solutions include strengthened political leadership and organization to improve educational policies and practices that rekindle traditional culture.

Chapter V
Solutions for Effective Aboriginal Policy and Programs

Aboriginal Leadership

There are multiple views on how to achieve effective education and training policy for Aboriginal employment. Many Aboriginal groups maintain that the first crucial step is to evaluate and strengthen Aboriginal leadership. This section will explore models of Aboriginal leadership from historic to contemporary forms. It will trace mandates of national, provincial, and municipal Aboriginal organizations that contribute to policy and programming including functional strengths and challenges.

Exploring the rich history of Aboriginal leadership demonstrates complexity and diversity in addressing governance issues. One may describe general patterns of communities "raising" leaders and women choosing leaders who had ingrained personal qualities of patience, community service, stewardship for the land, wisdom, courage, and peace as well as political principles of consensus, accountability, and respect. If a leader displayed poor judgment, it was the community, particularly the women, who chose another (Cassidy & Bish, 1989; Mercredi & Turpel, 1993; Porter, 1984).

However, there were many differences in leadership characteristics among Nations. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996, Vol. IV) suggests that women held different political roles between Nations and that "Inuit women deferred to male leaders in public decision making but had considerable influence in social relations and family affairs, especially as they grew older. In some Aboriginal societies, women had a more subordinate role" (RCAP, Vol. IV). Therefore, though

common patterns of traditional leadership emerge, it is difficult to speak of a common model of traditional leadership.

Contemporary Aboriginal leadership remains varied though current models have changed dramatically from traditional forms. The Indian Act developed leadership policy that disrupted traditional systems by introducing the Canadian federal system of leadership through 'top-down' governance. The Indian Act introduced a new governing body, the Band Council, led by a federally-appointed chief and council. The Council's actions are monitored and directed by the Department of Indian Affairs, and they answer to the Minister under provisions of the Indian Act though these appointments generally favoured Aboriginal individuals sympathetic to co-operative relations with federal authorities (Alfred, 1999; Mercredi & Turpel, 1993; Monture-Angus, 1999).

The Indian Act introduced legislative measures that supported the national goal of assimilating First Nations' styles of leadership to the Canadian system with ultimate jurisdiction resting with Euro-Canadian leaders. Many Aboriginal people voiced resistance, which only convinced federal authorities to legislate sterner measures as Canadian legislatives interpreted these protests as ignorant and childish (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Measures in the form of Indian Act amendments gave further powers to the superintendent general and Indian Agents with fewer powers to First Nations people. Further, voting rights were denied until 1917, when status Indian men received the right to vote in Canadian elections. Women were restricted from voting in local or national elections until 1951 (Voyageur, 1996). In summary, the Indian Act removed the traditional leaders from

their respected position in First Nations' communities and mobilized Indian Agents and Band Councils to enforce Euro-Canadian policy.

Despite the pervasiveness of the Indian Act in creating Band Council governments that undermined traditional leadership forms, they did evolve in localized circumstances in forms. Cassidy and Bish (1989) proposed that "the traditional and the Indian Act methods of choosing leaders may be divergent in their principles and operation, but they are often intertwined in a complicated and evolutionary manner as band council government functions in a particular community setting" (75). For example, the Blood Tribe of Alberta returned to an electoral system of "Tribal custom" therefore incorporating the elected band council system with traditional practices (Cassidy & Bish, 1989). This leadership model has evolved with localized circumstances, and though forms vary, the Indian Act drastically altered these forms from historical to contemporary times.

Most Aboriginal communities can agree that the Indian Act obstructed complex web of spiritual and social principles guiding Aboriginal leadership. These communities are fueling a growing momentum for political mobilization to identify forms political oppression and to remember traditions in the past in order to apply them in the modern context. Currently the concept of local control[4] is steering

[4] There is significant debate over appropriate forums for progressive change in a departure from colonial control. Some propose that self-governance, defined as self-administration of services, is necessary for well-being through effective service delivery, rebuilt economies, and healthy individuals (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Others suggest that the design, delivery, and administration of services remain integrated within the Canadian system indicating that solutions are multi-layered and complex. More debate is fueled by those who propose that the notion of self-government only exists in opposition to dominant non-Aboriginal systems and that it incorrectly implies that people were previously incapable of self-governance (Monture-Angus, 1999). The term local control is intended to be compatible with self-determination, a concept encompassing an authority to exercise political, social, and legal controls among one's own community and following traditional understandings.

Aboriginal people away from their past relationship with the Indian Act and offering options for rebuilding traditional leadership. However, the forum and process remain controversial. The tedious business of negotiating local control within current legal structure is risky because there are few precedent-setting claims for the courts to look back on, and plodding through the technicalities over rights, or title claims that include constitutionally protected rights, interpretations of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and treaty agreements is very consuming and costly. It seems true that First Nations' people must make many sacrifices in their attempt to understand the court system and these sacrifices may outweigh the gains (Monture-Angus, 1999). On the other hand, many Aboriginal people resent the implications of 'asking for' or being 'granted' rights because it legitimizes an unjust claim of colonial jurisdiction over them, believing the inherent right of self-government is not a negotiable issue (Monture-Angus, 1999).

To speak of Aboriginal governments and Canadian governments as separate entities that exist in duality may blur the complexity. There is no unified "Aboriginal" or "Canadian" perspective regarding Aboriginal leadership and these perspectives should not be presented as diametrically opposed. To do so would hinder practical applications for empowerment because, according to Monture-Angus (1999), they create "distance rather than relationships" (28). To avoid the trap of polarizing Aboriginal from Canadian ways, it is important to acknowledge the variance within and between Aboriginal groups as well as differing negotiations within the Canadian legislatures. There is much diversity between various First Nations, Métis, Elder, Inuit, women, youth, urban, and other Aboriginal communities

and this makes it difficult to describe a common "Aboriginal' perspective in regards to local control in policy-building.

Aboriginal Organizations

Many national, provincial, and local Aboriginal leadership organizations represent specific Aboriginal groups and influence Aboriginal policy. The most prominent national Aboriginal organizations include Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Métis National Council, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Native Women's Association of Canada, and National Association of Friendship Centres whose mandate, structure, and activities are summarized in the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative Toolkit (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1998). The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) defines itself as the national voice for Canada's Status Indians to devise common strategies on collective issues. Comprised of the Chiefs of the First Nations and lead by an elected National Chief, the AFN addresses issues of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, Environment, Economic Development, Education, Housing, Health, Social Services, or Land Claims.

The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) is the national voice of the Inuit in Canada. Governed by an executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Regional Corporations, it addresses the preservation if Inuit identity, culture, and way of life through issues such as self-government, health and social issues, language and culture, Inuit rights, and communications (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1998).

The Métis National Council (MNC) is the national voice for the Métis Nation. Government by local, provincial and national structures that vary according to local needs and relationships to government structures, its mandate is to ensure the

full participation of the Métis in the process of asserting inherent Aboriginal Métis rights to self-government and self-determination.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) represents the interests of off-reserve First Nations, Non-Status, and Métis people in Canada. It is governed by an elected president and vice-present, as well as an executive council comprised of its thirteen affiliate organizations from all provinces and territories. The mandate is to work towards the treaty rights affirmed in the Constitution Act of 1982 as well as rights affirmed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms for all Aboriginal people regardless of residence or status (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1998).

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is an aggregate of Native Women's organizations to enhance, promote, and foster and social, economic, cultural, and political interests of Native women. It has a strong interest in urban issues as a result of women forming the majority of off-reserve populations. NWAC is directed by an Executive Council and a Board of Directors as well as thirteen regional representatives, four regional Elders, and four regional youth representatives. Central issues for NWAC include the Indian Act, the Constitution, family violence, AIDS, justice, health issues, child welfare, and Aboriginal rights (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1998).

Finally, the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) supports urban Aboriginal people. It is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, eleven regional representatives, a youth representative, as well as an Executive Committee. The primary objective of NAFC is to provide a unified voice for the Friendship Centre Movement as advocates for Aboriginal peoples, and to present the needs of

Friendship Centres to the federal government and general public (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1998).

At the provincial and territorial levels, there are "identity-based" organizations representing Status Indians, Métis, and Inuit. At the municipal level, there are also organizations that may present comprehensive policy solutions to Aboriginal needs because they are familiar with local and immediate issues, and therefore have excellent advantage to forming new initiatives. Although these organizations have the daily experience and knowledge to form successful programs, there are restrictions on how far they are allowed to budget for advocacy. For example, their budgets are often reliant on provincial and federal governments for contract of contribution funding, and this creates an uncertain funding base. Other limitations are the complex reporting requirements that tax the sometimes-limited organizational resources. Further, service providers are often geographically dispersed, making it difficult to collaborate with like organizations and share best practices. Despite these limitations for advocacy services, these localized Aboriginal organizations may be the way of the future because they are responsive to immediate and localized problems and can foster social cohesion (Graham and Peters, 2002).

Further, there are many forms of Aboriginal leadership that are not formally recognized by Canadian governments. There is an array of boards, societies, and commissions to accomplish leadership tasks (Cassidy & Bish, 1989). These organizational approaches vary among Aboriginal communities depending on size of the band, location and its political culture. Currently, individual communities have vastly different leadership approaches as they negotiate their different relations with

their own governments and with Canadian governments. For example, some women's groups question a return to traditional customs. Jackson (in Hylton, 1994) asks "Would it involve a return to the historical subservience of Aboriginal women to Aboriginal men, or would it involve the equality of power between Aboriginal men and women that existed earlier but was distorted by the imposition of European patriarchal law and practices" (193). It appears that many Aboriginal people have different relationships to traditional practices of leadership therefore there could be differing degrees of effectiveness of resurrecting the traditional practices in the modern context of self-government.

Many Aboriginal groups are realizing that local control of services is more effective in addressing healing and governance needs. Successful programs are designed to address the unique needs of the community language, culture, and life situations. When locally run, they build trust, provide continual support and follow-up, and are geographically situated in areas that provide economic benefits for the community, and reduce the need for state intervention (Hylton, 1996). Nevertheless, it is challenging to provide the essential services to their communities while defining an independent relationship with the Canadian government. While evidence suggests that self-run programs are more effective and offer numerous benefits for Aboriginal communities (Hylton, 1996), it seems necessary to clearly define the objective sad administration of these services so that roles, funding, jurisdiction, and administrative details are clearly defined. Further, once the goal of self-administration is achieved, the process of reforming, evaluating, and follow-up is achieved so that the leadership

can address the changing needs of the community (Eberts, 1997; Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996).

While Aboriginal organizations are dedicated to advancing the political, social, economic, and cultural integrity of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the process of self-determination is ongoing, controversial, and requires continued evaluation. Local control should not be the end goal for Aboriginal communities as a process of critical reflection and continued policy reform ensures quality programming. The process of reflection and reform should involve multiple stakeholders including community and parent groups as well as the voices of youth. Alfred (1999) suggests that "[i]t is important not to disillusion youth by the hypocrisy of older people, especially politicians, [who] simply turn their backs on their communities and drift toward mainstream society" (129). When youth feel engaged and empowered by their education, they can learn leadership skills that will enable them to interact with mainstream society from a position of confidence. Youth, as potential leaders, are important stakeholders in the process of policy building and join Elders, parents, public members, political leaders, and others in planning, implementation, and evaluation phases. Though the path to local control involves challenges, it offers several rewards of cultural dignity and cultural survival. Alfred (1999) proposes that local control will open discursive spaces to "awaken people's minds" (132) and to resist domination so that Aboriginal discourses can regain authority.

This section suggests that reevaluating Aboriginal leadership is a crucial first step toward effective Aboriginal policy. In tracing changes in Aboriginal leadership from historic to contemporary forms, we have seen a traditional leadership system

based on a complex balance of spiritual and social principles. The imposition of the Indian Act undermined these principles by taking jurisdictional powers from First Nations' people and placing them in the hands of select Aboriginal individuals who were appointed by Canadian government officials.

There is a growing momentum to acknowledge the long and tragic record of imposed Euro-Canadian policy and to apply traditional leadership principles in a modern context. Because perspectives on leadership vary, issues should be addressed on an Aboriginal nation-to-nation basis in a forum that allows a diversity of opinions to be heard. The self-administration, design, and delivery of Aboriginal policy is based on a mixture of ancient wisdom and unique contemporary realities that also involve Canadian governments.

A range of national, provincial, and local organizations address Aboriginal issues and the specialized needs of Inuit, Métis, off-reserve First Nations, Non-Status Aboriginals, and Aboriginal women. These organizations have differing political jurisdictions yet exemplify a framework for effective policy analysis and implementation.

Despite their many visions for Aboriginal empowerment, these forms of leadership present hopeful policy alternatives. When contemporary Aboriginal leaders can pursue the tedious business of negotiating local control they can offer creative solutions for self-determination.

Education and Training Policy and Practice

The discussion of current Aboriginal educational and training policy cannot be isolated from larger discussions about cultural, political, and economic concerns.

Aboriginal education and training will always involve cross-cultural negotiation and power differentials. Aboriginal educational leaders are continually negotiating with the Canadian governments over educational policy. They often learn to balance their commitment to traditional teachings of Aboriginal worldviews with administrative funding pressures that may suggest that if the educational program is too radical it does not fit funding criteria. Non-Aboriginal administrators, teachers, and community members and increasingly private, for-profit stakeholders have shaped and continue to shape Aboriginal education.

Deloria (in Marker, 2000) suggests that the dominant ideology drives education and training programs and impact the life possibilities of Aboriginal people.

> We are led to believe that we are prepared to exercise self-determination because we are now able to begin to compete with the non-Indian world for funds, resources and rights. But we must ask ourselves, where is the self-determination? What is it that we as selves and communities are determining? We will find that we are basically agreeing to model our lives, values, and experiences along non-Indian lines (34).

While Deloria speaks generally about assimilation of Aboriginal policy makers, Smallface Marule (in Marker, 2000) suggests that First Nations' people in Alberta are afraid of losing their wealth and resources and therefore do not challenge dominant educational paradigms. She suggests that, "We are locked into the non-Indian economic system. We are hooked on consumerism" (35). Aboriginal leaders, in the path towards local control of education, must consider the dominant ideological pressures given the context of power differentials. The power to create effective Aboriginal educational programming is by Aboriginal communities who are able to

challenge dominant paradigms, balance the power differentials, and negotiate administrative details.

School Models at Post-secondary Levels

The 1972 document Indian Control of Indian Education released from the National Indian Brotherhood, now called Assembly of First Nations, increased a public consciousness of rights and set the impetus for the federal government and First Nations' communities to reevaluate schools. Progress was slow, but significant steps were achieved as seen in the emergence of several school models. In 1982, DIAND published a review of Indian Education, "Indian Education Paper Phase I", that addressed concepts consistent with Indian Control over Indian Education that articulated three objectives:

a. To assist and support Indian and Inuit people in having access to educational programs and services which are responsive to their needs and aspirations, consistent with the concept of Indian Control of Indian Education.
b. To assist and support Indian and Inuit people in preserving, developing, and expressing their cultural identity with emphasis upon their native languages.
c. To assist and support Indian and Inuit in developing or in having access to meaningful occupational opportunities consistent with their community and individual needs and aspirations (DIAND in Canadian Education Association, 1984, 12).

To achieve these objectives, significant steps were taken to facilitate the movement towards increased control. School models offer alternatives for First Nations' administrators, though controversial issues exist at various levels. At the post-secondary level, there are over 100 indigenous programs and institutions, which are characterized by varying degrees of organizational autonomy. Barnhardt (In Hampton & Wolfson, 1997) defines three models as independent,

integrated/federated while recognizing a third model, the assimilationist model, as the most common example.

The independent model ensures that community input directs programs to meet community needs. This model features local control such as band-controlled schools where most success has bee noticed in responding to students' needs (Kanu, 2002; Longboat, 1987). However, significant barriers exist in its implementation such as the limited size of the institution, lack of resources, inability to offer recognized accreditation and lack of trained faculty. While some people maintain that the emergence of various educational models shows hope that state-band negotiations are effective, other people maintain the First Nations' objectives are theoretically supported by governments but not practically implemented (Alfred, 1999; Hampton & Wolfson, 1997; Kirkness, 1999).

The federated model features Aboriginally-run programs within a non-Aboriginal institution though both shared responsibility for curricula, personnel, and resources. The advantages include maintaining Aboriginal control while sharing resources such as libraries which lend credibility to the program (Hampton & Wolfson, 1997). However, when Aboriginal programs remain dependent on the host institution's structure and procedures involving a complicated and time-consuming bureaucracy, First Nations may sacrifice important advantages of their program.

If knowledge production is centralized in non-Aboriginal institutions we see reinforced inequitable power relations and entrenched relationships of dependence. Profound aspects of Aboriginal worldviews such as the process of individual and collective reflection, struggle, and resistance are devalued or lost. Castellano (2000)

suggests that the integrity of Aboriginal knowledge may be sacrificed when retranscribed by people distant from everyday realities of Aboriginal people. She warns that those who retranscribe Aboriginal knowledge, whether they are Aboriginal people who have extensive contact with mainstream society or well-intentioned non-Aboriginal advocates of cross-cultural understanding who have considerable distance from the everyday situations of Aboriginal people, deny a collective consensus of the interpretation of the knowledge. In other words, the meaning of the knowledge can be lost or misconstrued.

The assimilationist model expects students to adapt or assimilate to the dominant institution thereby eliminating nay potential ethno-cultural tensions. This model presents a case that this schooling influences in human advancement. In reality, the governance structures, teaching, services, and knowledge-base of the institution can perpetrate racism by denying legitimate contributions from First Nations' peoples, resulting in institutions that were "structurally, epistemologically, and instructionally biased" (TeHennepe in Hampton & Wolfson, 1997, 93). These education and training programs often used an "add-on" model where pieces of Aboriginal knowledge were added to set curriculum. In this model, Aboriginal students are supposed to assimilate into the mainstream institution.

Assimilationist models have seen governments, armed with political tools and backed by mass appeal, attempt to created education and training programs for Aboriginal people. However, the appropriation of Aboriginal knowledge is not automatically empowering, especially when hastily and uncritically adopted. There is significant political distance between policy makers from Euro-Canadian

backgrounds and those from Aboriginal backgrounds that makes this knowledge commodification inappropriate, unworkable, and sometimes immoral. It can create a form of "intellectual piracy" whereby the interests of stakeholders, often centralized in bureaucratic institutions and who are often motivated by profit, claim rights over this knowledge which then suffers by becoming reduced, evaluated, decontextualized, privatized, and otherwise manipulated to fit or justify specific agendas (Shiva, 1997). In other words, in a context of foreign-run education programs, Aboriginal knowledge can be altered and filtered to become small units that can be acquired, borrowed, sold, and even resold back to Aboriginal peoples often using the same system as corporate patents (Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Samoff & Stromquist, 2001; Shiva, 1997). If knowledge production is centralized in non-Aboriginal institutions, we see inequitable power relations and entrenched relationships of dependence. In this way, the knowledge economy parallels the globalization of the market economy and subjects Aboriginal people to structural inequalities (Samoff & Stromquist, 2001; Shiva, 1997). The assimilationist model illustrates that foreign control over the content and delivery of education can create a collision of political and cultural goals.

To summarize, these models feature varying degrees of local control from the independent model, the federated/integrated model, while the assimilationist model seems to be most common. It becomes apparent that the use of Aboriginal knowledge within assimilationist or federated education and training models can reinforce inequitable power relations and disregard human rights.

Emancipatory Education and Training

Local control of education may offer the potential for successful outcomes in a pluralistic society. Therefore the independent model may best serve Aboriginal students, parents, and communities. The independent model may offer freedom to explore and retheorize educational and training to move from what Graveline (1998) calls a "pedagogy of violence" to a "pedagogy of resistance". A pedagogy of violence refers to the imposed form of colonial and neo-colonial educational control that excluded First Nations from educational planning and enforced an education that sought to control Aboriginal forms of consciousness, potential outcomes in the previous assimilationist and federated models of educational institutions.

On the other hand, a pedagogy of resistance is an Aboriginal response that resists historical colonization and (re)centers traditional Aboriginal systems of consciousness, worldview, and culture. A pedagogy of resistance, when practiced, examines political constructions of identity, language, and culture in a way that "allows it to be collectivized beyond the individual and understood in terms of its social construction and its changeability over time and context" (Graveline, 1998, 18). In other words, Aboriginal consciousnesses politicizes historic and social construction of First Nations' identity as a first step to reclaiming traditional knowledge and in doing so can simultaneously enhance emotions of pride as well as defiance. A pedagogy of resistance rebuilds an empowered identity where oppression is resisted and traditional consciousness, worldview, and culture is restored.

A pedagogy of resistance refers to a model of education that borrows from the emancipatory theory of education. The philosophical and theoretical foundations of

emancipatory education are based on several traditional tenets and historically–respected research including critical, feminist, Marxist, Freirian, participatory and transformative theories to develop practices that are praxis oriented and emancipatory in intent. Emancipatory education arose from the rejection of positivist views of education that searched for knowledge through scientific methodologies that, as illustrated in Human Capital Models of education, fails to acknowledge historical and social contexts (Baptiste, 2001; Mertens, 1998). The underlying theory guiding emancipatory education is joint knowledge construction, critical reflection, dialogue, praxis, and empowerment.

Brazilian education Paulo Freire reminds us that social change is possible through a process of conscientization defined as reflection and action. He argues that liberation must come from insiders rather than imposed from outsiders because the dominant class has interests in maintaining its dominance. Freire suggests that the educational process should promote human agency in the process of personal and social transformation for more socially responsible educational goals (Freire, 1970/1972; Godonoo, 1998; Schugurensky, 1998; Torres, 1995).

Former Tanzanian president and educator Nyerere believed that if education had been used by colonial powers to enslave people, then it could be used by anti-colonial powers to liberate them (Nyerere, 1968). Anti-colonial education would identify and change social structures that bind people. This inquiry is open to the experiences of oppressed peoples and often inspires people to social change as it focuses on lived experiences. An anti-colonial approach to collecting and disseminating information includes three precedents: first, to reconceptualize the role

of knowledge management to focus on facilitating the pooling of knowledge rather than gate-keeping the knowledge; second, to collect knowledge in a participatory manner; and finally, to offer fuller descriptions of Indigenous knowledge in order to provide a more contextual basis for the knowledge. If knowledge is summarized, it should be done by those who produce it. The credibility of capacity-building knowledge rests in accountability to specific communities or locations including the social, cultural, economic, political, spiritual, and ecological peculiarities of the local community directed by local people who are empowered to make decisions (Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Shiva, 1997).

Emancipatory education acknowledges that teaching and learning is political process. Issues around positionality, power, knowledge construction, and representation are central to education and training programs and must be addressed by the instructor. Instructors are ethically obliged to identify and declare their own approach to teaching above and beyond the organizational goals set by employers. Instructors facilitate shared learning by anchoring instruction in the lived experiences of the group. Their ideas, values, and knowledge biases are acknowledged but that this is secondary to the sharing of experience, of learning from experience, and of making the experiences problematic in order to see the root of oppression. In this model, "the teacher becomes a facilitator and the traditional class becomes a culture circle, the emphasis…becomes relevant to the group (Schugurensky, 1998, 2). Emancipatory education highlights the social relations by equalizing the power between instructors and students (Freire, 1972; Lather, 1991).

The equalized roles of the instructor and participant allows for an educational process that is critical of personal and political oppression. This involves a holistic linking of global events to personal, social, and political acts. While critical, this component cannot lead to transformation unless it is empowering for individuals to take collective action, to forge new lifestyles of resistance, and to transcend structure of domination. Participants develop and analyze socially-constructed knowledge and, though methods vary, the outcomes of training confront causes of injustice, exploitation, violence, or environmental degradation (Deshler & Selener, 1991).

Emancipatory educators do not treat empowerment as simplistic by assuming that they are in position to claim equality or to empower others. Claiming equality and working to equalize are semantically and practically very different as Gordon (1993) suggests, "A focus on equalizing rather than giving a voice emphasizes a consideration of how resources and power get concretely redistributed" (438). The process of empowerment is fluid and multifaceted and it cannot be given or taken. It is grounded in the struggle of marginalized communities but does not guarantee successful outcomes. In summary, if educational instructors and administrators are in positions of power they can perpetuate dominance that emancipatory action hopes to fight.

Emancipatory education draws on connections between local and global perspectives and seeks to transform systems of oppression. Regardless of the specific topic of learning, the educational or training program must account for numerous variables to ensure program success, including: the purpose of learning, the educator's background, position, or perspectives, the audience, their reasons for

participating and their barriers to their participation, the course content, and the environment for learning. This goal for emancipatory education is social transformation for instructors and participants alike, values that permeates all spheres of life. It is a path less traveled because of its novelty, complexity, and abstraction. However, the potential merits invite the creative spirit of the teacher and learners alike to discover new realities, learn common goals, and to transform systems of oppression.

If Aboriginal education followed a paradigm of emancipatory education, it may contain elements identified by Kanu (2002) in her study of First Nations' students in a Winnipeg High School. Kanu recognized that cultural socialization influences learning patterns, including how students respond to curriculum materials, instructional strategies, learning tasks, and communication patterns. Therefore, Kanu suggested progressive communication strategies, assessment strategies, and the creation of effective instructional materials based on traditional approaches to learning. Traditional methods of oral interaction, concepts of self, curriculums, and the educator's interpersonal style provide culturally relevant settings for students to thrive.

The first theme explores traditional Aboriginal approaches to learning (traditional meaning Aboriginal approaches to learning practiced outside the formal school system). Aspects of traditional approaches that are effective in the classroom include storytelling and other oral interactions that are short, minimal, and clear. She suggests that many Aboriginal parents communicate with their children through straightforward directives that leave little room for misunderstanding. This theme

suggests that the style of traditional oral interactions that is familiar to students should be mimicked in the classroom.

Another theme explored was concepts of "self" in the learning process. Kanu (2002) found the Aboriginal students that she interviewed valued interdependence, communality, and social relations and identified with models of learning that support cooperation, collaboration, group effort, and group rewards. Therefore, group work and tasks would were recommended tools given effective organization and planning.

The theme of curriculum relevance to enhance learning has long been acknowledged as crucial for several reasons. First, much curriculum continues to be dominated by Eurocentric curriculum, second, that Aboriginal students are often treated as invisible or degraded if included in texts. Third, relevant curriculum, such as seeing successful Aboriginal professionals helped to validate identities, motivate participation, and help develop cultural pride. One student interviewed by Kanu (2002) suggested that it helped him think of his future:

> Yeah, these pictures [of successful Aboriginal people] make you feel like you have a chance. You walk downtown Winnipeg any day and all you see is [sic] Aboriginal people lying on the ground either completely drunk or asking for change. That feels really depressing and hopeless. But when you see pictures of Aboriginal people who have succeeded--police officers, lawyers, and all that--you feel you have a chance and you push yourself more in school to be like them (114).

Aboriginal students respond with interest when curriculum includes Aboriginal perspectives, histories and traditions, as well as interests and arts. Curriculum, then, should begin from an appreciation of who students are and what their interests may be.

The number one rule that students have identified as the most important dimension for the relationship between teachers, administrators, and Aboriginal students is respect (Kanu, 2002). Some student participants elaborated on some behaviours that express respect:

> Treating me like I already have something the teacher respects (Liz).
>
> Not making me feel dumb in front of the whole class. Treat me like I know something which the teacher may not know...everybody knows something (Don).
>
> It is as simple as valuing and understanding me as a person. Like, just teach the way you want to be treated...You know, teach with respect for us as individuals and do not treat us like we are all the same (Rich) (in Kanu, 2002, 115).

Respect is foundational to traditional Aboriginal values and according to researchers Haig-Brown et al. (in Kanu, 2002), "Respect encompasses the understanding that children are complete human beings given as gifts from the Great spirit on loan to adults who share with them the responsibility for preparing them for life's journey" (115). They also suggest that "You are born as equal and you are born with respect...every individual has it [respect] and you don't have to earn it" (115). A successful classroom will show respect for students' knowledge and experiences while also balancing teacher strictness and personal warmth.

This section suggests that aspects of culture influence learning for First Nations students in the classroom. The themes of traditional Aboriginal approaches to learning, concepts of self, curriculum relevance, and respect are highest ranking indicators for student interest and participation in education.

Kanu (2002) suggests cultural aspects that influence Aboriginal learning success while a second scholar, Hampton (1995) tries to define an Aboriginal practice

of education. He exemplified his 'iterative' mode of inquiry that uses metaphors of circular learning rather than a linear modes of inquiry. Using elements of grounded theory, qualitative analysis, and participant observation, he developed a six directional chart representing: Spirit, East, South, West, North, and Earth as a pattern for organizing twelve themes of Indian education: spirituality, service, diversity, culture, tradition, respect, history, relentlessness, vitality, conflict, place, and transformation. He exemplifies transformation by centering Indigenous knowledge as a means to restore a traditional worldview in Indigenous learning circles. This paradigm exemplifies transformation by centering Indigenous knowledge as a means to restore pride and dignity in Indigenous learning circles.

Aboriginal students may rekindle identity and language through educational models that include ceremonies, healing rituals, and earth centered approaches. Respect of the local history, language, and specific traditions enable students to internalize a localized identity, a feeling of distinctiveness, and a place of belonging. It allows the potential for students to emerge with their identity anchored in the traditional worldview while having skills necessary to succeed in the dominant society (Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1987). They can blend ancient wisdom with contemporary reality.

This section examines Aboriginal educational and training policy as it is negotiated within cultural, political, and economic dimensions. Aboriginal education and training is a cross-cultural endeavour and will therefore involve negotiations of power and control. Non-Aboriginal administrators, teachers, and community members and increasingly private, for-profit stakeholders have shaped and continue

to shape Aboriginal education through models characterized by varying degrees of organizational autonomy. Indian Control of Indian Education set the impetus for the federal government and First Nations' communities to reevaluate schools in favour of locally-controlled school models. These models feature teaching a pedagogy of resistance that borrows elements form emancipatory education that rebuilds an empowered identity where oppression is resisted and traditional worldview is restored.

Chapter VI
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This thesis is concerned with the Human Capital Theory as it is employed in education and training policy and programs for Aboriginal people living in Canada. This required exploring many issues such as historical contexts of Aboriginal education, Human Capital Theory, current services and policy, options for greater autonomy through strengthened leadership, and finally, options for socially-responsible education for transformation. The broad range of issues illustrates issues of education, culture, identity, and political control have an historic context and are multi-layered and complex.

Chapter I introduces the research by presenting the research purpose, overview, methodology, and scope. Chapter II, *Introduction to Aboriginal Education and Training,* covers a history of Aboriginal education from traditional to colonial forms. Traditional Aboriginal education is described as a web of spiritual and social principles guiding instruction and learning. This form of education contrasts with federal government colonial forms that were built on social hierarchies and regulatory systems that dictated accessibility and quality of educational services, and often served to educate Aboriginal students for second-class citizenship.

Committed resistance by Aboriginals, parents, students, and community leaders toward government education policies resulted in reconstructed visions of local control using traditional aspects of culture within a modern context. This resistance movement differentiated between Canadian forms for education and

training and traditional forms and suggested that Aboriginal people may have to look beyond Canadian institutions to restore traditional educational values.

The History of the Human Capital Theory turns to social theory adhered to by many Euro-Canadian leaders. It explores its inception in 1776 by Adam Smith, through chronological developments by other Human Capital "camps" for almost 200 years when a formalized Human Capital Theory suggested that education is an investment and that resulting economic growth could be measured and compared locally and internationally. These historical developments suggested that individual investment in education resulted in additional income, and with the promise of increased income and consequent greater wealth, human capital was seen as a mechanism for predicting economic growth.

This chapter also explores assumptions about the free market forces influencing economic opportunity, human nature, educational quality, and social mobility. Social structures such as socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, and gender may limit one's life chances and present contradictions to human capital assumptions about free market forces, as do ever-changing desires for socially and environmentally responsible lifestyles. As well, individuals or governments do not always get the best value for their money in educational systems as administrators, teachers, and students negotiate values and resources. Finally, the Human Capital Theory cannot promote social justice with its assumptions about the apolitical and unchanging nature of the world, a theory that may require further analytical and political development. The Human Capital theory can result in gaps in the pluralistic needs of their students that may sacrifice human rights.

The chapter, *Human Capital Theory and Alberta Government Programs for Aboriginal Employment* explores an Alberta Government program, "First Nations Training-to-Employment" as an example of a government model that encourages participation and partnerships between public, private, and educational sectors. Though progressive in many respects, this program borrows from Human Capital thinking by promoting employability skills in needed sectors of the economy that boost the national economy.

Personal observations of these programs propose that there are political and structural elements that blur the links between education and training, employee productivity, and healthy local and national economies. These elements include personal and individual barriers such as unstable housing, lack of education, or disabilities, and they contribute to difficulties with transitions from one cultural setting to another as well as an inability to feel attachment or belonging to workplace environments.

The business community suggests that lack of information and lack of support impedes Aboriginal employment. However, with projected labour shortages, business is starting to develop equity policies and practices that will support Aboriginal recruits, as well as fostering relationships in diverse workplaces. Information and regional publications assist business to address fair hiring practices, productive workplaces, and equal opportunities.

Policy recommendations include strong collaborative partnerships between multiple levels of governments, band governments, and local communities to create a more holistic understanding of the diverse cultures and politics of Aboriginal peoples

where successful policy depends on the ability to clarify roles and deliver services that address lived experiences and diverse histories and that assure individual success.

The thesis then examines options and suggestions for improved policy and programming through culturally-appropriate education systems. *Solutions for Effective Aboriginal Policy and Programs* suggests that the Indian Act undermined principles of traditional leadership by taking jurisdictional powers from First Nations' people and placing them in the hands of select Aboriginal individuals who were appointed by Canadian government officials. This impeded the implementation of sound policy initiatives. Alternatively, effective policy requires strong leadership to plan creative models for local control and to negotiate with Canadian governments in areas of administration, design, and delivery. Therefore, Aboriginal policy is based on a mixture of ancient wisdom and unique contemporary realities that also involve Canadian governments.

There are multiple visions for Aboriginal empowerment as it relates to leadership, healing, and distinct paths toward local control. Many national, provincial, and local organizations comprise Aboriginal leadership that addresses the specialized needs of Inuit, Métis, off-reserve First Nations, Non-Status Aboriginals, and Aboriginal women.

Finally, this chapter addresses Aboriginal education and training policy that departs from colonial forms. Educational and training policy is negotiated within cultural, political, and economic links to the Canadian governments and economy with varying degrees of autonomy that has implications on power relations and human rights of Aboriginal students.

Models featuring local control respond to multiple challenges of globalization as they inform educational theory. New tools such as democratic consultation processes, consensus building, community sharing, and true partnerships may be required as education and training programs can only be meaningful as social levers if the lives, histories, and cultures are represented in the classrooms and if students are educated for equality.

Conclusions and Implications

This study investigates the influence of social theories on education and training in diverse environments. It is concerned with the Human Capital Theory in education as it is employed in designing and funding education and training programs for Aboriginal people living in Canada. It attempts to accomplish two primary goals: to look more closely at theories of social behaviour and their historic and contemporary applications, and to suggest that education and training practices have deep cultural roots that can improve education and training policy and practice.

This research examines and critiques the Human Capital Theory and its application in educational and training. Critiques of this theory suggest that it is apolitical, individualistic, excessively market-oriented, and it ignores specific cultural-learning characteristics. Therefore, this research suggests that individual failure may be attributed to the application of this social behaviour theory. When applied in Aboriginal contexts, the Human Capital theory can exacerbate inequalities and negate equal life chances. Local control may ensure that the application of social theory matches traditional social contexts and may improve life chances for students.

The historical framework in this thesis identifies traditional forms of education and leadership in order to highlight notable characteristics, to emphasize significant changes for Aboriginal communities with colonial legislation, and to mark a path for the future negotiations between Aboriginal and Canadian political leaders.

This thesis does not relegate injustice to a "tragic history" due to "errors" of past legislation (Bull, 2000). It hopes to not polarize Aboriginal leadership and educational practices from non-Aboriginal leadership and practices. Rather, it hopes to mark progress and challenges regarding local control so that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike are motivated to work for similar goals of self-determination.

The Government of Alberta program First Nations Training-to-Employment, albeit broad in description and analysis, exemplifies collaborations and negotiations between Aboriginal, provincial governments, and other stakeholders to create programs, offer funding and administrative supports, and provide recognized accreditation for Aboriginal students to ultimately improve life chances.

However, the Alberta government also wishes to maintain its "Alberta Advantage" in pursuit of global economic competition, inviting corporate influence in social and political structures. Employers promote their interests in educational policy that improves employability skills by training individuals to fit the needs of the economy. In this way, the Alberta Government is endorsing the Human Capital Theory. Further, because of limitations of Human Capital policy such as its failure to address multiple barriers, it may actually inhibit Aboriginal participation in training programs. This may suggest that collaborations and negotiations for Aboriginal

education are subject to ideological pressures within political and economic environments.

This thesis explores strategies to create education and training that value Aboriginal thinking and strengthen Aboriginal identity. First, there is a critical need for strong leadership that adheres to traditional principles and addresses diverse needs of women, Inuit, Métis, urban, aging, and youth populations. Strong Aboriginal leadership implies an ability to strategically separate itself from other Canadian government programs, yet effectively negotiate funding, delivery, and evaluation, depending on the location and specific community needs. These leaders have a responsibility to consult with their members, to create vision and goals for policy and programs, to steer through timely and at-times risky legal proceedings, and to be held accountable as the locally-run programs unfold.

This thesis supports the notion that Aboriginal leaders can create effective educational policy if it is embedded within traditional values and practices. Effective educational and training programs come from local design and implementation, so that learning environments, curricula, and class communications are consistent with the participants' cultural traditions.

This thesis identifies education and training paradigms and criteria for student success. Emancipatory education is conducted with people from a historically-marginalized racial, ethnic, or social class group. It is led by a facilitator who is an 'insider' to the group, is interpreted within the intellectual framework of that group, engages members of the community as co-creators of knowledge, is conducted largely for the purpose of liberation for the members of that community and finally,

tries to understand and transform systems of oppression. It is applicable to all classrooms and to all learning abilities. Under this paradigm, education and training programs could simultaneously address technical skills while also supporting needs of the group. Knowledge is learner-directed and addresses personal and individual barriers through personal development. As emancipatory education attempts to equalize life chances, it may teach skills necessary for participation on the "new" economy through communication skills and technological orientations. Emancipatory education also examines the political context of schooling and employment by addressing employment-related barriers that impede hiring, retention, and promotion. Emancipatory paradigms can equip learners with knowledge and skills to feel engaged with their learning and to succeed in developing their talents.

Recommendations

This exploratory study develops some tentative explanations concerning the application of foreign social behaviour theory in education. However, research is still largely inconclusive about many claims relating to specific Aboriginal educational policy, which highlights the difficulty in arriving at a concise principle for creating policy that utilizes relevant social behaviour theory and therefore addresses life improvement. Suggestions for further research may follow two veins: research to define the goal of "equal chances" in policy, and research on educational methods that support Aboriginal performance in educational settings.

Educational policy aims at improving life chances for individuals. Yet the term "equal chances" is ever-changing and requires sustained research for updated definitions. In the past, "equal chances" meant equal distribution of education and

training programs across a wide demographic group. Research focused on the need for on-going educational access for adults. Further study may be required on how education policy can offer solutions for groups and individuals with different needs. It must remain flexible by offering basic qualifications for some, high educational attainment for others, as well as continuous access for adults involved in the labour force. Further studies may probe how educational policy can promote strong talents while also giving special attention to disadvantaged students.

The concept of equal chances is coming to mean more than equal access to education and training, but how education and training may ensure equal outcomes. While the "new" economy is highly technological requiring high level skills, there will be elements of the "old" economy existing concurrently with slow-productivity jobs. Further research is required on how to ensure "new" and "old" workers will maintain equalized qualities of life. Possible avenues may explore special assistance programs or subsidies for employment that requires only basic qualifications. Updated definitions of equal chances must encompass the potential gap between old and new workers, it must address implications of technology on training, and it must address a flexible educational system, all of which require sustained research for updated applications.

The second vein of recommended research is in the area of Aboriginal education and training with regards to methods that ensure Aboriginal groups succeed in educational settings. Many Aboriginal programs have expended human and financial resources with little success thus necessitating a comprehensive theoretical base for Aboriginal education and training. While this study suggests that certain

learning styles tend to be predominant in certain cultures, it implies that student success hinges on whether their learning styles matched the curriculum and instructional methods. However, this suggestion remains inconclusive due to lack of research and further evidence is required.

Research remains largely inconclusive on the specific aspects of culture that mediate student success, making it difficult to suggest concrete solutions for educational achievement. Further research is required on the most important factors which may include values of competition and interdependence, notions of fate and how this determines achievement, and purposes and goals for education and training.

Finally, while these recommendations call for further study on principles of learning styles within Aboriginal education and training, it must also consider the diversity within and between Aboriginal students. We could learn from additional studies that influence policy that account for issues of mobility or urbanization. Further research could help to understand how Aboriginal services could acknowledge historical and contemporary differences among Aboriginal people while also addressing equitable access.

Further research designed to test the key findings of this study can develop informed recommendations that guide all teacher education and education and training policies for Aboriginal employment.

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